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MAY 1997

ISSUE #97

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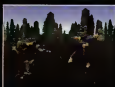
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Square is back with a new game and, surprise, it's not an RPG! On the contrary, it's a sword fighting game that's gonna set the fighting game genre on its ear! Find out about *Bushido Blade* and more on page 22.

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WILD 9s



044

FEATURING:

MDK



062

What game lets you surf, parachute, and blow off someone's head at 1000 yards? Why, *MDK*, of course! Check it out on page 62.

MANX TT



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It's out of the arcades and on the Saturn! Take a test drive with *Manx TT* on page 32.

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LUNACY



070

BLAST CORPS



075

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In our new *ULTRA GP* GameShop section, you'll find loads of super-cool prizes, including your very own *Brahma Force* model! You can also try your hand at snagging one of our other way cool prizes!



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He's making a break from the PC to the Saturn! Watch out!!! *Duke Nukem 3D* kicks butt on page 56.

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Loading



EDITOR CHRIS SLATE

Gang, I might as well get this over with and tell you right up front — this will be my last issue. I'm leaving to start a new Imagine mag, one dedicated to the PlayStation. I know that I'll have loads of fun putting it together, but I'm really going to miss you guys here at *ULTRA Game Players*. The staff here has been like a family to me,

and even though I'll still be working only a few doors away, I'm going to miss working with them very much. But after eight years of working on the same magazine, it's time I had a change of scenery.

Anyways, I'm leaving you in very capable hands. *UGP Online* Editor Frank O'Connor will be taking over for me, and if you thought things were weird and wild before, you just wait...

See you soon, and don't miss my new mag later this year! >>> **C.S.**

start a new Imagine mag, one dedicated to the PlayStation. I know that I'll have loads of fun putting it together, but I'm really going to miss you guys here at *ULTRA Game Players*. The staff here has been like a family to me,

chris slate

I'm outa here!

Lame Duck Editor Chris Slate is hoping that the new Editor will continue his ritual of donning the Purple Cape before every team meeting. 'He's gotta get his own cape, though', says Chris.

roger burchill

rburchill@gameplayers.com
Reviews Editor Roger Burchill hopes the new Editor will have the same fondness for Hamster Habitails as he does. 'I like crawling through the pipes, but running on the squeaky wheel is the best part', says Roger.

mike salmon

msalmon@gameplayers.com
Previews Editor Mike Salmon believes the new Editor shouldn't be adverse to making sure Mike gets more dunks during office b-ball games. 'I just hope he knows how to do the Alley-Oop pass correctly!'

bill donohue

bdonohue@gameplayers.com
Managing Editor Bill Donohue hopes that the new Editor is an English guy, because, 'I still have about 500 English guy jokes left over from when Mark Hightman was here. I really need to say 'Dunkirk' again!'

The new guy (?)

Since the New Guy hasn't signed on yet, we really don't know what she's looking for in an Editor. We're pretty sure she hopes the new Editor doesn't have a penchant for rewarding lateness with a rubber hose...

May '97

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ON THE DISC

No matter how good a videogame magazine may be, there are some things that you just can't get from print. We can show you the pictures of the games, but it's impossible for us to let you play the game for yourself, or even see the game in motion. Enter the **ULTRA Game Players** Disc Edition. On the disc, which works with both Apple Macintosh and PC compatibles, you'll find movies of all the newest, hottest console games, as well as playable demos of the biggest PC and Mac titles. Read the print magazine, check the web site, and view the disc to get the full **ULTRA Game Players** impact. Questions regarding subscriptions should be sent to: subscribe@gameplayers.com. Faulty disc/subscription questions: phone 415-468-2500. Current subscribers can receive the disc by following the help line instructions.



PREVIEWING PC GAMES

Front Page Sports Football Pro '97 Whether you call a safety blitz or a last-second Hall Mary pass, victory is just a game away!

Hover Race Race your Hovercraft for free via the Internet in this fast-paced game.

MDK Shiny calls it Max, Dr. Fluke Hawkins & Kurti. You know it as Murder Death Kill.

POD Survive a powerful whiplash race through a rapidly decomposing planet.

Snake & Knuckles Collection Battle the evil Dr. Robotnik in this Sega release for your PC.

Tomb Raider Demo Part II Can Lara Croft find the ancient Atlantean Scion?

MAC GAMES

Boom Relive the glory of the old 8-bit days on your Mac. This game can be best described as Bomberman meets Doom!

Avatia If you enjoy MUD or MUCK adventuring, Avatia has something to offer you.

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NetMech Battle up to seven other MechWarriors over an IPX, AppleTalk, Internet, Modem, or Serial connection.



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SWEET GAMING GOODNESS!

videogame movies

Why settle for just cml screens when you can see the games in action for yourself? Just take a look at this month's hit list:

MANX TT
BLAST CORPS
BRAHMA FORCE
DESCENT MAXIMUM
FIFA 64
HEIR OF ZENDOR

J-LEAGUE
PERFECT STRIKER
LOST VIKINGS
LUNACY
MEGA MAN 8
RALLY CROSS

SCUD
THUNDER
TRUCK RALLY
VMX RACING
WING COMMANDER IV



VIDEOGAME VIOLENCE: (THE DEBATE

Despite the intervention of politicians, videogame ratings, and outraged parents across the country, it appears that videogame violence is here to stay

The February cover of *ULTRA Game Players* screamed 'N64 gets mean!', in reference to *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*. And we weren't joking. Acclaim's first-person reptile-roaster (for those who haven't played it, it's kind of like *Jurassic Park* in reverse) not only features kills by the hundreds, but buckets of blood and gore. This from a company who, four years ago, refused to include bloody fatalities in the Super NES version of *Mortal Kombat*.

So why the change of heart? Why has Nintendo decided that blood 'n' guts is OK? Well, it would seem that Nintendo is simply following the herd. Violence sells. Violence, it seems, is what gamers want. And so Nintendo — like everyone else — is delivering. Unfortunately, however, this trend has drawn criticism of the videogame industry from politicians and other 'concerned' individuals.

The debate first got serious back in 1993 when *Mortal Kombat*, Digital Pictures' *Night Trap*, and *Doom* were the most high profile games in town. On November 15, 1993, Daniel E Lungren, the Attorney General of California, felt moved to write to Nintendo, Sega, and Capcom to 'ask you to stop the manufacturing, licensing, distribution or sale of any videogame that portrays graphic and gratuitous violence.' Why? Because he believed that, 'interactive videogames which promote violence have a deadening, desensitizing impact on young impressionable minds.' He went on to say that videogames should take some of the blame for the increases in juvenile arrests for murder.

On December 1 of the same year, troubles escalated. Senator Joseph Lieberman called a congressional hearing to discuss videogame violence in which he commented that 'Violent videogames may actually become the Cabbage Patch Dolls of the 1993 holiday season — and that would be too bad.'

Cabbage Patch Dolls never oozed blood and kids were never taught to rip off their heads or tear out their hearts and spinal cords, but that is exactly the kind of gory violence that is found in some of the games that are on the market right now.' The Senator implied that if the videogame industry didn't clean up its own act, then he would make sure that laws were passed to do it for us. In subsequent interviews,

the Senator has claimed that 'People who play violent videogames will have a tendency to be more violent, or at least less struck by violence in real life.' He also argues that kids watching TV are observers, but kids playing videogames are participants,' and that this somehow makes the effects of violent content even worse.

The trouble, of course, is that none of these politicians actually have any proof to back up their claims. And some experts are willing to argue against their reasoning.



A Lizard guy takes it in the gut in this scene from *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*. Can videogame violence dull gamers to the real thing?

Professor Henry Jenkins, the director of Media Studies at M.I.T. [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] says 'I don't think Senator Lieberman's confronting the real problems. I think his campaign is an attempt to focus on a symptom rather than on the problem.' He goes on to conclude his analysis of the debate by arguing that, 'If you really want to control violence in society, I don't think you start with videogames.'

The videogame industry has, however, established a ratings system to keep Senator Lieberman happy (through the trade organization IDSA), but otherwise has basically carried on like before. If anything, the violence has gotten worse. There are four main reasons for this:

First, *Night Trap* actually sold more after Senator Lieberman criticized it on national TV. Digital Pictures' Tom Zito recalls, 'the sales of *Night Trap* accelerated tremendously during the period when it was almost impossible to turn the television on at night and not see a ten second clip from the game.' The lesson here is that controversy sells. (You want more proof? When Dr Walsh of the National Institute of Media and the Family presented



At one time the king of the gore gushers, most gamers now view *Mortal Kombat* as very tame, when compared to later titles.

JUST WON'T DIE

his annual 'Top Ten Worst Offenders' list of violent videogames on TV last December, Lee Jacobson of DigiFX Interactive actually criticized the list for not including its *Harvester* game!

Second, after the Genesis version of *Mortal Kombat* (which did contain all the original's blood) sold considerably better than the SNES version, the Videogame industry has learned that gamers don't want coin-op conversions that don't contain 100% of the original's features — just look at the controversy surrounding the removal of road-kill from the N64 version of *Cruisin' USA*.

Third, the establishment of a ratings system has allowed companies such as Nintendo to safely allow violent games for its system. As long as they make sure that violent N64 games are marked with the appropriate warnings, then it can let *Acclaim*, *Williams*, and whoever else include as much blood as they want.

And last, game designers have learned that violent content is a useful tool in making sure that games are fun to play. *Id Software's* Jay Wilbur explains how violence was put to good use in *Doom*: 'In *Doom*, when you walk into a fully-lit room and you see a rocket launcher right in front of you, you desire it, you grab it easily and you think 'great!' But then the door slams shut, the lights go out and creatures flood you from all sides. Now that turns the nob on the adrenaline dial up a notch. And it's that perceived danger and adrenaline rush that makes *Doom* such a fun game to play.'

Digital Pictures' Tom Zito agrees that violence can be used creatively to enhance a players' feeling of involvement in a game. 'One of the classic movie techniques of motivating people to care about characters is to present a very real threat to the characters. So, with *Night Trap*, we created a violent environment in which you had to go in every room, because if you don't catch these bad guys, they might hurt

somebody.'

Pretty much the only thing that is guaranteed is that as better and better videogame hardware enables more sophisticated graphics — and hence more realistic violence — the debate is only going to intensify. The next two games destined to be at the center of controversy are *Final Fantasy VII* (will Sony make Square remove its 'mature' content or not?) and the new *Castlevania* (is that really a depiction of a blood-drenched crucified Jesus figure in early screenshots?) So should you, as a clear-thinking gamer, be concerned about videogame violence? Personally, we like the final analysis of *Id Software's* Jay Wilbur when he concludes that, 'Playing videogames is a great release of violence, and this is a belief that is echoed back to me by countless experts in the field'.

ULTRA Game Players would ask the people who claim that violence is caused by videogames to explain the Middle Ages, one of our most violent periods. What made them commit wholesale mayhem? After all, they didn't have videogames...

You can blast demons of Hell right back to... um, Hell in *Doom 64*



Cruisin' USA offers high speed mayhem for those bored with the daily commute.

Final Fantasy VII may cause quite a stir with its controversial mature content.



The Japanese version of *Castlevania X* is rumored to have a burning cross in it. Two characters duke it out in the Casino level in *Final Fantasy VII*. While there's no blood, several other scenes may stir up the Moral Majority.



NEWS FEED

• Engage Games has joined forces with Jones Communications for high speed access to its gaming service. Jones has been offering cable and coax network access to the Internet for more than a year and will be acting as one of Engage's primary distribution partners. • A slight argument broke out about the selection and nomination of SPA (Software Publishing Awards) winners for this year. Lead primarily by Apogee chief, Scott Miller, who asserted: 'The SPA is the whole software publishing organization,' he told Next Generation Online. 'And so these might be perceived as being kind of like the Oscars for gaming. But how could you assess a game like 2015 above either *Quake* or *Duke*?' SPA responded by stating: 'In order to win a nomination, publishers must submit their game to the judges. A panel of 175 journalists and industry representatives then choose the games which go forward to the final.' • Constant one-upmanship continues to be the norm in the systems wars. Nintendo, Sony and Sega continuously fired shots at one another regarding their sales figures for the Christmas season. Nintendo pointed to TRYST reports for verification of holding nearly 50% of the sales for last Christmas, while Sony brought forth its own figures claiming to be

continued on pg. 14

MPLAYER FIRES SHOTS IN ONLINE GAMING WAR

Mplayer shocks online community with new dual price structure and revenue model

Following the lead of some ISPs, such as Bigger.net, Mplayer will offer many free services to subscribers through the support of advertising. While most games will be available in the free sections of Mplayer, a new

they are looking at a potential expenditure of millions of dollars. For us to upgrade, we just throw a few more pizzaboxes [servers] along our backbone that cost us a few thousand dollars each. It's really a different system.' So far, Mplayer hasn't really faltered in terms of performance, even under the new load, but it is still too early to tell if they will be able to keep up in the face of continued increases in traffic.

Mplayer's competitors seem to have hardly blinked in the face of the announcement. TEN dismissed the Mplayer move by saying 'this move shows that Mplayer has given up as far as offering a premium service is concerned. They are scrambling for a new business model.'

Engage also paid Mplayer's decision no mind when it recently announced its hourly price model. About the only other service which followed suit was SegaSoft's Heat gaming network, which

Kristin Asleson is the Vice-President and General Manager of Mplayer.

will be offering both free and premium portions of its services. Interestingly enough, CSK,

SegaSoft's parent company, also owns a stake in Mplayer and as a result, Heat will be utilizing some of Mplayer's technology in its own service.

Clearly the big winners in this situation are the gamers who were curious about online gaming, but were either unwilling or unable to pay for such a service. Further, the ease of use provided by a gaming service will enable large numbers of gamers, who would have otherwise been unable to connect to the various other free gaming solu-

tions due to technical difficulty (MUDs, Quake servers, etc.), to now join the online gaming revolution. With luck, other services will eventually come around to Mplayer's model and bring even more of the mainstream market into the online gaming community.



The Mplayer logo promises more exclusive games at lower prices!

premium service called Mplayer Plus will be launched that will provide access to some more exclusive games and additional services, such as special promotions, tournaments and more. This service will cost \$30 per year, as opposed to the previous price of \$20 per month.

Mplayer may have placed itself in the same situation as AOL did when it drastically changed its price structure. 'When you look at AOL, they are acting as a POP provider more than anything else', says Kristin Asleson, Mplayer's vice-president and general manager. 'Mplayer doesn't act as a provider and relies upon people's existing connections. Secondly, for AOL to upgrade their mini-based system and network,



As these screens show from Mplayer's website show, gamers will be able to get a lot more from the service, such as news and chat rooms, as well as games.

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number one in sales for the same period. • 3DO had a round of layoffs in their development and marketing personnel. A number of projects were canned, but reportedly none of them were public knowledge. More than 20 employees were released. • Infogrames has acquired Philips Media's division, thus signaling the end to yet another mammoth company's involvement in the game industry. With the transfer, Infogrames adds the Dutch company's subsidiary to last year's acquisition of Britain's Ocean. As part of the deal, Infogrames will gain control of a number of European distributors, Philips' back catalogue, and its development staff. • Nintendo's Hiroshi Yamauchi drew attention to himself at a press conference where he stated that 'most of its [Sony's] software titles are silly and boring' adding that 'a flood of uninteresting and boring software will destroy Japan's videogame market'. Yamauchi, in combative form, also claimed that Sony's acquisition of *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy VII* to PlayStation would have 'virtually no impact on Nintendo's business'. • THQ saw massive increases in profits in its last fiscal year. Sales for the year ended December 31st were up 51% to \$50.2 million, while profits increased from \$600,000 in 1995 to \$1.9 million. The

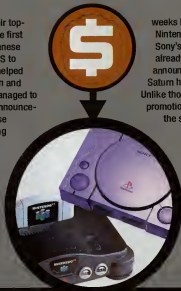
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PRICE WARS

ENSUE AGAIN

Sony and Nintendo are taking off the gloves in a no-holds-barred price war

Gamers the world over are jumping for joy, as Nintendo and Sony both drop the prices of their top-of-the-line gaming consoles. Nintendo was the first to drop price to approximately \$130, but only in the Japanese territory. Sony then countered with a price drop in the US to \$150 and to similar price points world-wide. The move helped steal much of the press from Nintendo's recent European and Australian launch. A little over a week later, Nintendo managed to completely botch what was to be their next price drop announcement. Having spoken to certain members of the Japanese press, Nintendo let it slip that a price drop was happening to match Sony's new price world-wide. After the less than stellar coverage, it decided to cover up the announcement by backpedaling and claiming that it was the result of a mis-translation. Nintendo continued by stating that it would place the decision of price drops into the hands of each of its subsidiaries (e.g. Nintendo of America). Such a move is unprecedented in Nintendo's history, where NOA typically has to ask permission to blow its nose.



Much to no one's surprise, not more than two weeks later, Nintendo of America dropped the price of the Nintendo 64 in the US to \$150. Both Nintendo's and Sony's drop has really put additional pressure on an already harried Sega. While Sega has yet to make any announcements regarding price changes in the US, the Saturn has matched price in the Australian and UK markets. Unlike those markets, Sega of America still has its triple pack promotion running, where three games are packed in with the system.

In the mean time, Sony and Nintendo are increasing their manufacturing capacities to keep up with the increased demand at the new price points. Sony is expected to be churning out nearly 1.5 million units per month, while Nintendo is right behind them at approximately 1.2 million. Sega's plans for manufacturing for the remainder of 1997 puts it at a distant third with only 4.5 million for the remainder of the year.

With trends being what they are, consumers may see \$99 or \$129 PlayStation and Nintendo 64s by Christmas.

"You idiots. That was *our* village!"

31 puzzling new levels. 5 bewildering worlds. 3 burly Norsemen too stubborn to ask for directions. Runs all around Spring '97.



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Intellivision 0101-1111-1111-1111



OPTIONS

RATING KEY

- PREMIUM ★★★
- STANDARD ★★
- DEFICIENT ★

- RATING: ★★★
- PRODUCT: Pilot 5000
- COMPANY: U.S. Robotics
- SYSTEM: PC, Mac Compatible
- PRICE: \$299.00

As the technological revolution rages on, there are a number of products developed that are revolutionary in concept, but somewhat lacking in execution. The Newton from Apple Computers was one such product. The idea of a portable handheld computer that worked like a note pad was ground-breaking, but ultimately, the Newton was too big, too costly, and spotty hand recognition software made it awkward to use.

By reigning in their design parameters, U.S. Robotics has produced a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) that turns every negative the Newton had into a positive. Small enough to fit into a shirt pocket, the Pilot 5000 weighs just 5.7 ounces and can run for about 8 to 12 weeks on just 2 AAA batteries. At a suggested retail price of just \$299 (\$249 for the Pilot 1000), the unit becomes indispensable in organizing the infor-

mation that is usually scattered between a person's wallet, planner, briefcase, bookbag, or purse.

The Pilot 5000 can hold up to 2500 addresses, 2400 appointments, 500 to-do items, and 500 memos. The less expensive Pilot 1000 has the capacity to store 500 addresses, 600 appointments, 1000 to-do items and 50 memos. Information can be input using a stylus pen or by calling up an on-screen keyboard. Unlike the Newton, the Pilot doesn't recognize an individual's handwriting, but rather the user learns to write in a language called Graffiti which allows the Pilot to recognize letters written to its own specifications. This process is easier than it sounds and it also avoids all the problems associated with a PDA having to read a specific individual's handwriting — most people will be writing with no problem in about 20 minutes.

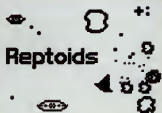
A handy program called the Pilot Desktop also comes complimentary with the PDA and allows the user to enter and back-up data via a desktop PC or Mac. Through a process called 'HotSync'-ing, the Pilot synchronizes new information entered on the PDA or PC automatically with the push of just one button.

Despite all the Pilot 5000's superb features and organizational abilities, the feature that will



- 1 The smallest PDA on the market, one-touch synchronization with PCs makes the Pilot 5000 an invaluable tool for work AND play.
- 2 Appointments, addresses, calculator, memos, to-do lists... and GAMES! All in a unit that fits in a shirt pocket...

Reptoids Info



© 1996 Brown Games

There are dozens of games that can be downloaded from the Internet. This one called *Reptoids* has a peculiar resemblance to a little game called *Asteroids*.

be of most interest to gamers is the ability to download games from the Internet onto this portable hand-held unit. Among the dozens of games currently available are a *Tetris*-clone called *Blocks*, an *Asteroids*-clone called *Reptoids*, and even a *Space Invaders*-clone. General gaming titles like *Black Jack*, *Solitaire*, *Chess*, *Reversi*, and *Concentration* are also available with the list growing everyday. There are a number of sites that offer these shareware and freeware titles, with a number of them linked to U.S. Robotics' site at www.palm.com. All of the games work remarkably well and the experience is akin to the gameplay of Nintendo's Gameboy. Sure, the Pilot 5000 costs more, but the superb all-around capabilities of the unit make it a purchase easy to justify.

NEWS FEED continued from pg 14

company released 31 games last year compared with 24 in '95. They included *Sim City 2000* and *NHL '97* for SNES, as well as *Urban Strike* and *FIFA Soccer* for Game Boy. • With the release of Square's *Final Fantasy VII*, a new trend in Japanese retail buying habits has been set. Companies like Sony are making sure that the kind of shops where you would normally buy magazines and candy, are well stocked with videogames. The release of *FFVII* was dominated by sales through one chain of retail outlets - Digicube. The chain of corner convenience stores sold nearly 1 million units of the game — which approaches nearly one in three of all copies sold. • Sony has announced that *Final Fantasy VII* will be released in the US on September 7, 1997. The September 7th - 9th timeframe has traditionally been the launch date for many important items for Sony, including the PlayStation itself in 1995 and *Crash Bandicoot* in 1996. • Sega laid off 65 members of its staff in the marketing and director level positions. • Mplayer has launched the Mpath Foundation which aims to "build long-term relationships" with companies looking to create their own online entertainment services. Essentially, Mpath, Mplayer's owner, is hiring itself out to companies wishing to set up services for their own games. •

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HUMOR...
Half The
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WIRETAP

Here are a few notes from the underground... Load them at your leisure...

Square to do Arcade Titles

Rumor has it that Square and Namco have entered talks about the possibility of a joint arcade venture. Allegedly, Namco has been impressed with Square's ability to expand its traditional RPG niche into the fighting (*Tobal No. 1*) and racing (mini-games within *FFVII* and its *AQUUS* racing title) genres. Sources inside Namco have indicated that 'the driving and snowboard sequences within *FFVII* have really caught our eye'.

Turok for PlayStation

Rumors have been circulating that *Turok* will soon be finding its way to PlayStation. The Nintendo 64 first-person shooter was released in March, but developer Iguana is understood to be planning a PlayStation game based around the *Turok* world. Insiders say the game will maintain elements of the N64 title, but will be story-boarded from scratch. Rumors of a sequel for Nintendo 64 owners are also doing the rounds. Expect more dinosaurs, new weapons and of course, more varied levels.



Scavenger in Trouble?

At last year's E3, Scavenger looked to be one of the most promising developers at the show. It had a number of graphically amazing Saturn and PC titles, in addition to one of the coolest designed booths at the entire show. In less than a year, it seems that Scavenger has all but disappeared. Its games have been more than six months late, and its flagship title, *Into the Shadows*, has been canned entirely. GT Interactive, who held the publishing rights to the majority of Scavenger's projects, has entered legal discussions with the company over breach of contract, especially over *Into the Shadows*, which reportedly had more than \$3 million already invested in development and marketing. To lend further credence to the rumor of Scavenger's demise, both the US or UK offices for the company have had their phone lines disconnected or completely unanswered for the last few months. For a company that was at one point in time estimated to be worth more than \$50 million, all is not well in the Scavenger camp.

Sega and Nintendo to Match Sony Price Drop

There is little doubt that while Sega and Nintendo have publically paid little mind to Sony's bold price drop, both companies will almost certainly match the price in the coming weeks, or at the latest by E3. Nintendo's George Harrison has gone on record stating that: 'What Sony does [with regard to pricing] doesn't concern us. We have sold all available units through the end of April, and as such, we have no need to match price.' In the meantime, Sega has reportedly already matched Sony's price in Australia, but Sega of America is still claiming that it has no current plans to match in this market. Industry pundits have little doubt that both companies are fighting a losing battle in seeing who will blink first in the price war. Eventually, all competitors will be at the \$150 price point or lower.



Jobs Eating Apple?

Recently, insiders at Apple predicted that Steve Jobs, one of the co-founders of Apple, will be making a play to gain control of the company. Since Next's (the company Jobs previously owned and ran) incorporation into Apple, Jobs and his cohorts have moved into positions of influence at Apple. Jobs denied that any such move was afoot.

Is STEVE JOBS looking for a bigger piece of the Apple pie?



BITS & BYTES

• In 1998, *Super Mario 64DD* will make its debut. Sources have indicated that players will be able to control a number of different characters including Luigi, Yoshi, Toad, Princess Peach and, of course, Mario. • At a recent press conference, Sony has indicated that it will be hardware constrained for the foreseeable future. It has also revealed that current manufacturing capacity for the coming year is about 1 million units a month. With these figures in mind, and with the current world-wide sales ratios, it is expected that Sony's US installed userbase by the end of this year will be approximately 6.8 million units. • Inside sources at Capcom have indicated that *DariusSpheres 3* will be arriving home on both Saturn and PlayStation in time for Christmas in Japan. There is no word yet whether the US will be fortunate enough to receive the game in the same timeframe, but a few months lag is not unusual. •

Sweet Dreams.

In the nightmarish world of the Swagman, members of the Dreamflight are being held captive. The twins Zack and Hannah need your help to make the night safe again for happy dreams.

Explore the eerie house of the real world and learn the bizarre secrets of the dream world with Zack and Hannah in 6 massive levels of adventure with 16 graphically intense 3-D settings.

"Swagman is eye-popping!"

-GameFan

"Swagman's dream-like graphics and involving gameplay will capture the player's imagination!"

-PS Extreme



SwagMan

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HYDROFOIL MODE:

Approx. height above ocean surface: 3' 6"



SURFACE WEAPONS:

- 2.75' Shrike homing missiles
- 2.75' Blowpipe heavy rockets
- 2.75' F-90 cluster munitions
- 25mm GAU-90 4 barrels rotary cannon
- 1" Stiletto salvo rockets

SUB-SURFACE WEAPONS:

- 2cm multiheterodyne pulse laser
- 3" EXT Disruptor sonic torpedo
- 6" Piranha heavy swarm torpedo
- 6" Mark-60 Thresher torpedo
- 6" Mark-65 Moray torpedo
- 6" Mark-68 Barracuda homing torpedo

**A killer submarine.
A deadly hydrofoil.**



SUB-SURFACE MODE:

Hull pressure resistant to 1100 meters





2060 A.D. The Red menace has resurfaced.

The sea boils with submarines and battlecruisers, blood and oil.

The skies are dark with enemy birds.

Tigershark has been deployed.

A fully-loaded subfoil prototype.

Forged for war. Built for speed.

Dead set on destruction.

Underwater. And over it.

Tigershark is hungry.

The feeding frenzy is about to begin.

The ultimate war machine...
COME HELL AND HIGH WATER

TIGERSHARK™



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all

SQUARE

in love and war



the complete list of square games

The Square name might be emerging slowly over here, but it has been a massively prolific publisher in Japan for years - just check out this (almost) complete list of its games.

THE FINAL FANTASY SERIES

- F. F. I
- F. F. II Japanese
- F. F. III Japanese
- F. F. II
- F. F. V Japanese
- F. F. III
- F. F. VII
- F. F. Adventure
- F.F. Legend I
- F.F. Legend II
- F.F. Legend III
- F. F. Mystic Quest
- F. F. SGI Demo
- F. F. Tactics

SQUARESOFT AMERICAN RELEASES

- Breath of Fire
- Bushido Blade
- Chrono Trigger
- SaGa Frontier
- Secret of Evermore
- Secret of Mana
- Super Mario RPG
- Tobal No. 1
- Tobal 2

JAPANESE SQUARESOFT TILES

Many of these are now famous, but we've explained the early, obscure ones for the curious, or friend-deprived.

- Teguzar (Famicom Disk, shooter)
- King's Knight (Famicom Cart, shooter)
- Suishou No Ruyu (Famicom Disk, adventure)
- Tobidase Daisakusen (Famicom Disk, 3D shooter)
- Appletown Monogatari (Famicom Disk, simulation game)
- Haokun No Fushigina Tabi (Famicom Disk, action game)
- Jikakushounen Met & Mag (Famicom Disk, puzzle game)
- Highway Star (Famicom Cart, racing game)
- Karlin No Ken (Famicom Disk, action RPG)
- JJ (Famicom Cart, 3D shooter)
- Deep Dungeon III (Famicom Cart, RPG)
- Akkusenkai Rajin (Famicom Disk, board game)
- Moonball Magic (Famicom Cart, simulation)
- Harjuku Hero (Famicom Cart, RPG)
- Square's Tom Sawyer (Famicom Cart, RPG)
- Nakaltoushi SaGa (Game Boy, RPG)
- Seiken Densetsu (Game Boy, RPG)
- Jikuu no Hasha SaGa 3 (Game Boy, RPG)
- Seiken Densetsu 2 (Super Famicom, RPG)
- Bahamut Lagoon
- Front Mission
- Live A Live
- Romancing SaGa
- Romancing SaGa 2
- Romancing SaGa 3
- Rudra's Secret Treasure
- Seiken Densetsu 3

THE MOSTLY SQUARE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Here's a closer look at the goodies Sony and Square are teaming up to bring you later this year. *Bushido Blade* and *Tobal* fans get a double treat, with full previews of each game in the preview section.

bushido blade

3D play areas make this fighting game a real original.

Bringing fighting games into the real world



Square is really pushing the frontiers of fighting games, first with *Tobal* and now with *Bushido Blade*. Although lots of newer fighting games give you the opportunity to use weapons, *Bushido Blade's* focus on swords and their correct use is unique. *Soul Blade*, for all its glory, is a pretty straightforward fighting game. *Bushido Blade* rewrites the rules.

This is truly 3D fighting. You are not limited to the standard square arena. In fact, you can run around the *Bushido* levels at will, climbing up onto platforms, or leaping into fast-flowing rivers. Square wanted to create a realistic fighting environment, and it seems to have done a pretty good job.

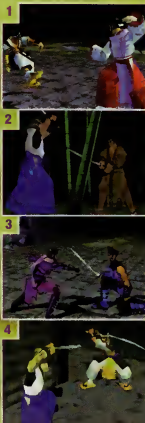
The premise is simple, but it adds up to a deep and complex game. Six fighters, a selection of the deadliest fighting implements you ever saw and a very rigid sense of honor add up to one very original game.

Although most fighting games rely on spectacular moves and special powers, *Bushido Blade* draws its additive nature from subtlety and style. OK, so pulling off a tough fatality in *Mortal Kombat* is pretty cool, but any move can be fatal in *Bushido* — you just have to do it perfectly.

The selection of moves is fairly standard, but both attacks and blocks depend on which of the three fighting stances you choose.

The fighting arenas are also filled with subtle, but important touches, like a wind that can really kick your butt, or a fast flowing river that makes keeping your footing tougher than defending your life. In one player mode, this makes for an interesting combat scenario. In two player mode, it makes for some interesting swear words as you fall into a pond, only to be killed by a leaping Samurai.

Each fighter has different physical abilities. Remember this when choosing your weapon. Choosing a weak female fighter may be disadvantageous if she is wielding a heavy hammer, but then she can still run pretty fast. Getting the right balance of character and weapon seems simple, but you'll be surprised constantly. *Bushido Blade* is a learning experience.



1 Weapons dramatically alter fighting styles; here, fencing is the "done thing". 2 Yes, you can cut the bamboo down and it makes fighting very tricky. 3 The fighter on the right has been crippled by a low blow, and now has to fight from his knees. It is possible (and honorable) to surrender. 4 Walls can block sword strokes.



THE HISTORY OF SQUARE

Square started life as the software development arm of a larger firm, called Denyuusha, and actually released its first game in 1983, for a Japanese personal computer. The tiny software division enjoyed limited critical and financial success for the next couple of years; but it wasn't until 1985 that things began to take off — the year Square was granted a Nintendo development license.

Its first Famicom (NES) game was a shoot-'em-up called *Taguzar*, with less than impressive graphics. Hardly an auspicious start, but the gameplay was sound and Square did well with the title, so well, in fact, that in April of 1986, it moved to larger offices in the expensive Ginza district of Tokyo. The software division had grown so large that it managed to lever independence from Denyuusha, its parent company and created Square Co. Again, growth meant that, by September 1986, it was forced to move to even larger offices. Square would release one more shooter, a game called *King's Knight* for the Famicom, before a new style of game would change its course and history forever.

In December of 1986, Square unveiled *Suikyo No Ryuu*, a disk based game for the Famicom (the disk drive was only released in Japan and eventually failed) with a then unique adventure premise. They went further later that month with the release of *Deep Dungeon*, an out and out RPG. Both games were well received, especially *Deep Dungeon*. Japanese players and press were enamored by Square's involved and entertaining storyline for the game.

Square became the leading producer of software for the

Famicom disk drive and, for the next year, released a bunch of high quality games, across all genres, but in December of 1987 its most pivotal game was released, on cartridge, for the Famicom. It was called *Final Fantasy* and it was a massive, massive hit. Actually, if *Final Fantasy* had been released on disk instead of cartridge, it may have sunk into obscurity forever.

It has been suggested that *Final Fantasy* is really a sequel to *Deep Dungeon*, Square's first RPG. Square certainly saw the value of sequels, because most of its revenue and success is built upon the growth of the *Final Fantasy* series. In fact, *Final Fantasy II* was released in December 1988, the first anniversary of the original game. This timeline was to become important to Square, but like any games company, it would suffer from delays — the scheduled December 1989 release date for *Final Fantasy III* became April 1990 — a firm commitment from Square that quality was more important than any other factor.

Square didn't have the whole RPG market to itself, though. Enix Software had just as great a relationship with Nintendo and was selling just as many copies of its *Dragon Quest* RPG series. Although Mario was of paramount importance to Nintendo, it can be argued that Square and Enix both contributed as much as the plumber to continued Nintendo success. Ironically, both companies would throw a wrench in Nintendo's works at the same time.

Any rivalry between Square and Enix was pretty friendly. In fact, the continued growth in quality in both the *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Quest* games can be seen as the healthiest

form of competition. Each company tried continually to make their RPG the best, mostly succeeding in turns.

By 1990, the Famicom was struggling against new consoles from NEC and Sega (PC Engine and Mega Drive, respectively) and Square was diligently working on a version of the game for Nintendo's new 16 bit machine, the Super Famicom (Super NES in the US) this time taking advantage of the Sony sound chip built into it — raising the stakes musically for every game producer in Japan.

In one of the biggest upsets ever seen in the video game industry, Square announced to the world in 1996 that *Final Fantasy VII* would not be produced as planned for the Nintendo 64, but instead for the Sony PlayStation, a move even more shocking because at that time, PlayStation was all but level with Saturn. Why did Square choose Sony over Sega? Why Sony over Nintendo?

In many ways, the initial choice was made for Square by Nintendo itself. The N64 had been delayed several times. Development specifications had been changed and canceled and perhaps the last straw was that the machine was to be cartridge based.

Square's *Final Fantasy* series was already outgrowing SNES cartridges. The memory requirements of next generation systems are huge. RPGs are in essence, very simple. Although *Final Fantasy* is a spectacular-looking game, the actual gameplay would work well on any system. Those texture maps, cinemas and soundtracks have to be stored somewhere. The N64 might be fine for arcade games, Square apparently reasoned, but RPGs needed the storage space that only CDs could provide.

What about 64DD? Couldn't Square wait until Nintendo's bulky storage device arrived? The fact was that *Final Fantasy VII* had been in

production for months when the format change was announced. It could be that Square originally planned to use all those rendered graphics and orchestral arrangements for a Nintendo game, but it seems quite plain that they planned the jump to PlayStation for a long time.

Square's defection from the Nintendo camp was important to Square, but perhaps more important to Sony. The announcement that *Final Fantasy*'s next generation debut would be on PlayStation was greeted with gasps of awe and amazement by Japanese gamers, as well as hugely increased sales of PlayStation over Christmas. Many Japanese RPG players were actually pleased by the announcement, reasoning that the PlayStation's superior (to Saturn, at least) 3D capabilities and color palettes would be well suited for the game's conversion.

Although it came as a surprise to US gamers that Square chose to release a fighting game last year, *Tobal No. 1* was just another in a long line of action games from Square. Previously, Square had released 3D shooters, platform games, even *Robotron* style blasters. *Tobal* did mark Square's arrival in the US as a major gaming force, rather than an RPG producer with a small US following.

When Square opened the Square LA office, it took yet another step forward. A rumored CGI-based *Final Fantasy* movie seems more likely now, especially with Mamco setting the pace by opening a movie animation studio in the US.

So Square still has lots to achieve on a worldwide scale. It may be single-handedly responsible for turning RPGs into a standard gaming format in the US, like fighting or platform games. A new facility is opening in Hawaii, soon, and it seems plain that Square is definitely here to stay.

Camera angles in *Tobal 2* are cleaner and better looking.

Tobal 2

More revolution than evolution.

Yes, it was a great game, but *Tobal No. 1* suffered in a couple of serious aspects. In many ways, it tried too hard. The story mode was kind of shallow and the fighting seemed vague and incomplete. Both of these issues were solved by long term play, but many felt that *Tobal* needed more immediacy, more instinctive action.

Square apparently felt the same way and, together with Dream Factory, the game's designer, set out to improve the fighting and the dungeon-exploring. The results are plain to see. *Tobal 2* is going to be a masterpiece.

The story mode is definitely a game in its own right, rather than a freebie built into a fighting game. The biggest visual change is

the use of outdoor arenas. Your fighter can move around above as well as below ground, giving it a more traditional RPG appearance.

The controls seem to have been clarified, too. In the first *Tobal*, your character often felt slow when it came to running around, but here, he's as nimble as a mountain goat. The battle sequences are pretty much the same, but this time with more bad guys, all of whom are preceded by a mysterious flame, so they don't simply appear in your face.

The fighting sequences though, have undergone the most dramatic changes. All the characters now have projectile moves. You can shoot off fireballs, flaming uppercuts or earthquake blasts at will, but you pay a penalty in energy — your life bar diminishes every time you use a projectile.

Much has been said of the new characters and, while there are tons of new faces in the game, only a few are controllable. One is a well-endowed and over-animated girl and another (and this was the worst kept secret in gaming history) is a giant yellow bird named Chocobo. Yup, the same Chocobo found in *Final Fantasy*. A controllable dinosaur and a brilliant heavyweight boxer add to the mix.

Tobal 2 is kind of a no-brainer if you have the original, but we think this is going to appeal even to people who weren't too impressed with the original.

The controls have remained the same, and everything else has been revamped.



1 The US characters have yet to be named, but this fire-breathing dragon is one of the better ones. 2 The all-new projectile moves are easy to do, but cost energy. 3 The backgrounds too have been improved, with better 3D and more attractive arenas. 4 Kili him.

Final Fantasy Tactics

A new spin on the Final Fantasy universe.

Cute super-deformed characters belie a tough and involving game.



SNES fans may remember a game called *Tactics Ogre* and more recently, a PlayStation game called *Vandalhearts*. *Final Fantasy Tactics* has a near identical premise. RPG combat without the exploration and puzzle solving elements. It's all fighting. In the case of *Final Fantasy Tactics*, it's darned good practice for the battle scenes in *Final Fantasy VII*, but more than that, it's a complex game in its own right.

We have to carefully point out that *Final Fantasy Tactics* won't appeal to everyone. It's a hard, hard game from the outset and actually gets tougher as you progress. Battles take place on cool isometric "boards". You move your teams of characters (6 turns) around on the board. The 3D nature of the board allows you to use the 3D objects for attack or defense advantage. Usually, your attacks will be stronger from on high, but you'll be pretty exposed for a return of fire.

In many ways, playing *Final*

Fantasy Tactics is like playing a flexible game of chess, where the knights and pawns can escape from their usual confines. It definitely requires patience to master, but *Final Fantasy* fans will appreciate the inclusion of their favorite heroes and villains, like Cloud Strife and Aerith Gainsborough.

Strangely enough, Square has managed to incorporate a bunch of secret stuff in an otherwise dry and serious strategy game — little nuggets of goodness for your delight and delectation. Chocobos, anyone?



ANDREW HOUSE IN THE HOUSE

He's the VP of Marketing for Sony and one of the main reasons Sony and Square are invading your gaming space. We cornered him for ten minutes to get the skinny on Square, Sony and the future of PlayStation gaming.

UGP: Who are you?

AH: This is an existential question, isn't it? Well, I'm Andrew House, the Vice President of Marketing for Sony Computer Entertainment America. When I left college, I went to Japan for two years and taught there. I joined Sony in 1990 and ended up getting involved in its hardware division. I came over to the States in February, last year. I think that this is the most fun part of the company.

UGP: Which game company do you most admire, other than Sony and why?

AH: I think a couple, really. One of which may be pretty obvious — Square. I admire its commitment to quality and its development of huge resources, all pointed towards a creative vision. I also very much like Artlink. Its prepared to take risks, do something that's different... a very nice bunch of people.

UGP: What do you hate most about the games industry?

AH: I honestly can't think of anything I hate about the games industry.

UGP: Go on, what about those snooping, irresponsible Games Magazines?

AH: No, really, I can't think of anything.

UGP: What's your favorite game?

AH: Defender. I think because I managed to break and finish the game in the arcades. More recently though, Warhawk is one of my favorite PlayStation games. I think it was pretty underrated.

UGP: How do you think Square's decision to make PlayStation games affected the N64 and Saturn markets?

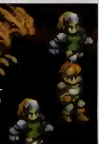
AH: I'd rather talk about the effect that decision had on PlayStation. If you read the initial press releases Square put out, CD was obviously a very big concern. I think it wanted to make sure *Final Fantasy VII* would be an immersive experience, audio, gameplay and I think that CD ROM and PlayStation were an obvious choice.

I think it has to be considered as a blow to N64, a blow in terms of its format. It should be stressed that if [Square] is still a multi-format game publisher in essence. It is still free to publish on other systems.

UGP: How important is the square library to Sony in the US?

AH: I think it's very important to us. It allows us to broaden our market into the important RPG sector and Square has so many other exciting titles, *Bushido Blade*, *Tobal 2*. Wonderful games.

You may recognize these guys from previous FF games.



1 The 3D nature of the "boards" will affect your fighting strategies. 2 Although the game style is kind of dry, the graphics are really, really pretty. 3 Battles happen inside as well as out. 4 Alee! Attack of the big evil dragon.

UGP: How long will Sony be publishing Square titles in this market, and will we see Square publishing games itself?

AI: It's a deal that comprises a set number of games. Beyond that, we'll have to wait and see.

UGP: Does Sony think that the RPG market is currently important in its own right, or do you see yourselves as evangelists, promoting this genre in the US?

AI: If we are evangelists, we're evangelists in the sense of introducing variety, a breadth of different game styles. There is a different way of approaching the games market than simply a limited number of titles spaced out. We want to see creativity and variety in the marketplace. The PlayStation business model allows smaller, creative companies to be involved in that process. We're evangelists for game quality and creativity, not necessarily for just one type of game.

UGP: How do you respond to hardcore RPG fans who worry about the tiniest details when it comes to translation of their favorite Square games (copyright debate etc.)?

AI: You're always going to have a hardcore fan out there. Square's games strongly exemplify this. There's this whole debate about censorship from Sony, but the localization and translation of FFVII is a joint effort between Square and Sony. We will make every effort to preserve the quality. It's not really an issue that we have control over anyway. Sony can't just take ownership of [a game] and do what they wish. A lot of Sony people come from the music division and they understand how important it is to try and preserve artists' rights.

UGP: Does Sony have any plans to pick up publishing rights for other under-represented Japanese softcos, such as Enix or Hudson Soft?

AI: I really can't say. I wouldn't rule it out, but we haven't gone down that path yet. It's very much a question for Enix and Hudson Soft to answer. Of course, anything is possible and it is something we will explore.

UGP: What was the last time you actually bought a game yourself?

AI: Honestly? I bought a copy of Wave Race 64. I bought it in Tokyo so that one of the guys in the office could evaluate it.

UGP: Did you play it?

AI: Might've done.

UGP: What is Sony's plan for the next five years?

AI: It's such a fast moving industry, you'd be very brave to make those kind of long term predictions. We see PlayStation as being around for quite some time. Currently our plans are all focused on making PlayStation the first truly successful mass market machine. I can't put a time scale on that. We want it to appeal across all demographics, penetrating more than just the games market. We couldn't be happier at the moment, having had a fantastic Christmas. We're happy with the new pricing structure and it's going to be a great year.



Not to be outdone by Final Fantasy VII...

Some people may prefer the cartoony style of SaGa Frontier to the realism of Final Fantasy VII. Everything is still rendered, just more colorful.

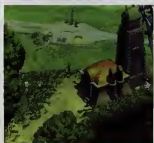
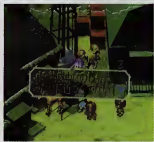
Saga Frontier is the fourth and latest in the Romancing SaGa series, although this time the plot and characters are in the 'side story' vein, inhabiting the same 'universe', but with different features, heroes and villains. There's plenty of stuff you'll recognize from the previous games, though.

Although this is likely to be eclipsed by Final Fantasy VII, it will have a strangely ironic appeal to Final Fantasy fans, given that it shares the Final Fantasy III fighting engine style. The battle sequences take on a more traditional isometric viewpoint, rather than the elaborate 3D modeling used in FFVII. Battles are actually tougher, too.

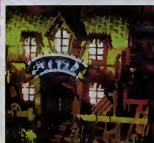
Music fans will get a lot of mileage from SaGa Frontier. The game will feature red-book CD audio, with a nice mix of orchestrated scores and original electronic sounds. Final Fantasy's reliance on chip music came as a disappointment for some. Square should also get plenty of mileage when they release the soundtrack independently, later this year.

Picking up SaGa is a firm show of

commitment from Sony, who has pretty much played it safe to this point with FFVII and Total. SaGa Frontier will be a great RPG, but has nowhere near the mass appeal of the Fantasy series. Square has also recently announced that it is working on Final SaGa, rumored to be the last game in the SaGa series, but you know how those RPG guys are. Expect a Final SaGa II in a couple of years....



SaGa is a big game, from a big series. The upcoming release in the US may bring a whole new generation into the distinct Japanese RPG style - companies like Working Designs have made a living from the cult status of RPGs, but can they become a standard game format over here?



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PREVIEWS

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Featuring

Ue've got some great new titles in our preview section this month! Check out *Manx TT*, *Wild 9's*, and *Tobal 2*! And, if that wasn't enough to satisfy your previewing needs, we've got yet another installment of our *Final Fantasy VII* preview! Come to think of it, we've had more new stuff on this fantastic RPG than any other mag! Now who else would go into that kind of depth for you, our loyal readers? No one but us, that's who! Let's get it on!



Manx TT

032



Wild 9's

044



Tobal 2

042



War, Inc.

051

034 Armored Fist 2

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Manx TT

SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SEGA
RELEASE DATE: JULY

Knee droppin', gut wrenchin', bug eatin' racing at its finest

Just another in the long list of excellent racing games produced by Sega's AM2 arcade division, *Manx TT* was unequalled in the sense of speed and exhilaration it communicated to the arcade gamer. The question now is whether Sega can manage to capture the essence of the arcade game in its translation for the home. Early indications are that it's on the right track.

The best version of *Manx* in the arcade was the force feedback single player unit which used a hydraulic mechanism beneath the seat to transmit suspension and tire grip information to players via, err... the butt. Combined with the incredibly high frame-rate, *Manx TT* was the next best thing to riding a real bike. Though it is impossible to recreate the feedback experience in the home, *Manx TT*, even in its early alpha versions, is running at 35fps, which translates into incredibly smooth and fast graphics. According to the producer, the completed game should run at about 40fps. Despite the game's frame-rate, there were instances of draw-in problems, but since even the arcade game suffered from this malady, it may be too much to expect that the problem be completely resolved by the time of its Saturn debut.

Gameplay in *Manx TT* lives up to its arcade brethren, but the really

intriguing aspect of the game is that it will be analog controller compatible. Motorcycle racing games like *Hang On GP* have always required players to 'tap' inputs when making turns because of the on/off nature of digital controllers. Analog control will allow the player to precisely and smoothly control the amount of lean desired when navigating a turn.

One point of concern (as with all arcade racing game conversions) is the matter of how much depth the gameplay will have. *Manx TT* in the arcade had only two tracks on which to race. Both the Laxey and the Manx track are slated to return in the Saturn version, but extra tracks are limited to the reversed mirror versions of the arcade tracks with only a possibility of a fifth Saturn exclusive track. With the graphics, control, and gameplay seemingly in line, it just remains to see whether *Manx TT*'s limited track count provides enough replay value for the Saturn owner.



An available first-person perspective puts the player right into the action.



1 Memorable moments from the arcade, like the jump from the Manx track, are recreated to good effect. 2 Although there isn't a huge abundance of competitors, the superior AI makes for some challenging competition. 3 With tracks that range through towns and across the country side, *Manx TT* provides some wonderfully detailed race environments. 4 Even in this early version, Sega has the frame-rate running fast enough to convey a true sense of speed.

1 *Manx TT* will be analog compatible, so the level of control will be revolutionary for a console motorcycle racer. 2 Playing 'chicken' with the wall at 100mph is what lies at the heart of *Manx TT*'s exhilarating gameplay. 3 Pay attention to track-side signs or it may well turn into a sign of doom. 4 Sound helped to increase *Manx TT*'s authenticity and realism in the arcade. The Saturn shouldn't have trouble recreating the experience.



Bushido Blade

SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHERS: SONY
DEVELOPERS: SQUARE
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

The most innovative fighting game in years is nearing completion

Sony still hasn't given an official release date for *Bushido Blade*, but we've already got the finished Japanese version in our hands. And although we haven't had enough time to get too far in this game, the one thing we can tell you is that it's like nothing you've ever played.

Conventional items like the life bar, stages, and three round fights

have been replaced by a completely new way to play a fighting game. The fights can end in one blow if it is delivered to a critical area, like the head or chest. Other attacks can cripple players. For example, if you strike a character in the arm, they are unable to use that arm to attack or defend. If you hit the legs, the character won't be able to move, but can still fight from their knees. This realistic approach to fighting means that every attack must be carefully planned out, because one opening and it's over. The control in *Bushido Blade* is also non-traditional. Instead of the usual array of attack buttons, there is only one attack button. By pressing the direction pad in different directions, you change the way you attack and defend.

There are a total of six characters to choose from and each one comes equipped with their own sub-weapon. The sub-weapons are things like Shurikens and small knives that can be thrown as projectiles. Once they are thrown, they can be picked up and thrown back by either character. The main weapon is chosen before each fight and the type and weight of the weapon completely changes how each character fights. Each character has their own set of skills, like speed and strength, that determine how well they can handle the different weapons. Four of the six weapons are two-handed and require a great deal of skill to be effective, but when they hit, they deliver a much greater blow.

The backgrounds in *Bushido Blade* are also quite different, with expansive landscapes full of objects. You can climb walls, jump on boats, fight knee deep in water, and hide behind stone structures. Because of these detailed backgrounds, much of the fight becomes trying to get into the best position before making your attack. With other elements, like the story mode, you have to escape from



the island while the other five fighters give chase. This adds even more depth and variety to the game. We'll continue

to update you on the progress of this intriguing title next month, after we've had some more time to test the waters.

The Fighters

The six characters in the game all have their own strengths and speeds which affect gameplay. For example, Black Lotus is one of the stronger characters and one of the few that can use the heavy hammer weapon.



1 Kanmuki 2 Mikado 3 Hotarubi 4 Tatsumi 5 Utsunomiya 6 Black Lotus



- 1 If you can manage to attack the player's legs, they must fight from their knees.
- 2 At that point, your opponent is allowed to surrender, so you can take off his head.
- 3 Using objects in the background for defense is key.
- 4 Using different combos helps to open up the defense.



- 1 More advance combos include three moves in succession, like this, but time these wrong and you are vulnerable.
- 2 The camera movement in *Bushido Blade* is smooth. When objects get in the way, they are made clear, so you always have a good view of the action.
- 3 In the story mode, all of the stages are connected by different bridges, making it like one big action game.

Castlevania X

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KONAMI
RELEASE DATE: AUGUST

One of Konami's most popular series is ready to continue on the PlayStation. *Castlevania* started on the NES and moved on to the Game Boy, SNES, and finally the PC

Engine, and every incarnation was a hit. So now, the 32-bit version is born.

The look and play of the *Castlevania* series has undergone some changes. The game introduces a new

level of gameplay depth, with added RPG elements, like talking and interacting with other characters. Other new features include spells and

a host of new weapons. One disappointment is that the whips and chains used to swing across gaps are not in this version. The graphics haven't changed much since *Castlevania IV* on the SNES, but the added special effects of the PlayStation and the larger color palette do make it the best looking *Castlevania* yet.

Hopefully the gameplay will hold true on the 32-bit systems. We'll let you know as soon as we get a chance to play some more of this game.

One thing you couldn't get in the 16-bit version were beautiful graphics like this.

1 You can turn into a bat to discover previously inaccessible areas. 2 Slick rendered interiors are here and should add to the story of the game. 3 The 3D graphics are sharp, but not up to the standards of other 32-bit games. 4 Check out these flame effects! 5 Here's our hero, running down the stairs in typical side-scrolling fashion.



Armored Fist 2

-M1A2 Abrams

SYSTEM: PC CD-ROM
PUBLISHER: NOVALOGIC, INC.
DEVELOPER: NOVALOGIC, INC.
RELEASE DATE: MAY

There is a general fallacy in the industry that great gameplay outweighs the importance of great graphics. Sure, great graphics are nothing without gameplay, but what graphics bring to the equation is often undervalued. If there was ever a game that proved what great graphics can do for a game, *Armored Fist 2* is it.

Novalogic's Voxel Space 2 terrain-rendering technology produces graphics that are immediately noticeable as superior to any of the competition, but it is while actually playing the game that the player notices what the incredibly smooth and detailed graphics bring to the gameplay. For perhaps the first time in a simulation game, camouflage works! Enemies in the distance are

practically invisible, not because they aren't rendered by the game, but because they blend in seamlessly with the environment. That fact alone adds a new dimension to the tank experience.

Improved sound and music in full 16-bit Dolby Surround Sound featuring tank sounds and radio chatter enhance the battlefield experience. Instrumentation is accurately detailed and based on actual documentation from General Dynamics, the tank's manufacturer. As is increasingly the norm with PC games, *Armored Fist 2* will feature cooperative play via modem, direct connect, or up to eight-player play on a network. A very welcome new feature is that only one copy of *AF2* is required for multi-player games.



Is it live or Novalogic's Voxel Space 2 technology? Incredible graphics highlight *Armored Fist 2 - M1A2 Abrams*.



1 From the air targets, to the smoke, to the detailed battlefield, this game will give anyone a military Jones. 2 When the quality of graphics reach this level, camouflage actually works and enhances gameplay. 3 *AF2* is filled with tons of modern military equipment.

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Moto Racer GP

SYSTEM: PC, PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: BFG
DEVELOPER: DELPHINE
RELEASE DATE: AUGUST

What has two wheels and flies?

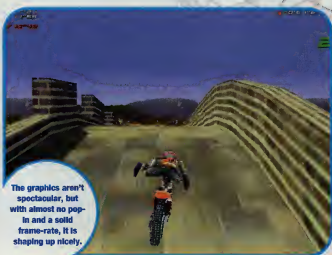
Delphine Software, developers of *Fade To Black* and *Time Commando*, are deep into a new motorcycle racing game for the PC and PlayStation. The PC version is scheduled for a June release and fea-

tures one of the smoother frame-rates on the PC. The PlayStation version isn't due until August, but it should look and play real similar to its PC predecessor.

The eight different courses from around the globe, including the Great Wall of China, provide a great variety of tracks and can be reversed to raise the total to 16. Different terrains like snow, dirt, and city make each race look and play differently. The eight unique bike models are taken from real Kawasaki and KT bikes and all have different acceleration, top speed, and handling. During races, you have the usual gas and brake control, but there is also a turbo that adds to the gameplay. When you press turbo, the motorcycle does a wheelie, which allows for fast acceleration, but is hard to control and often results in a crash. It's gameplay subtleties like that which could make *Moto Racer GP* stand out from the crowd.

The choice of head-to-head modern play or up to eight players via network gives *Moto Racer GP* all the features it needs to survive in the tough PC market. And while the console version won't be able to support that many players, there are plans for new courses and an even quicker frame-rate. If the developers can keep the speed of the game and continue to add gameplay, then *Moto Racer GP* could really be a sleeper hit.

Neither the PC or the PlayStation has a real motorcycle



racing game — the closest game is *Road Rash*. The problem with motorcycle racing has always been the stiff control, but taking advantage of hills, jumps, and even tricks could help *Moto Racer GP* gain success. The key is going to be the sense of speed, control, and depth. So far, two out of three appear to be in order. Now, if Delphine can shore up the third, *Moto Racer GP* will be set.

In an eight-player network game, things can get real interesting, real fast.



1 The feeling of speed is top-notch. Seven other racers intensify the experience.

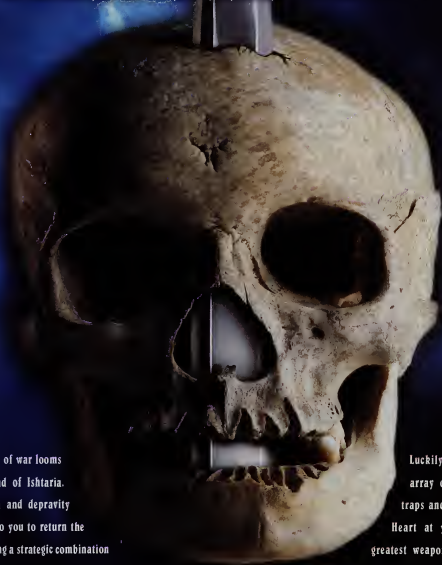
2-4 Different camera angles allow the usual views in *Moto Racer*.

1-2 Different courses, like the snow and dirt, make each race different. 3-5 The sweeping replay camera angles showcase the game's sharp graphics.





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VANDAL-HEARTS

Top Gear Rally

SYSTEM: NINTENDO 64
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: BOSS GAME STUDIOS
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Serious racing hits the Nintendo 64

Blending the styles of *Ridge Racer* and *Sega Rally*, Konami's *Top Gear Rally* looks to be one of the first 'true' racing games for the Nintendo 64. Developed by the up-and-coming Boss Studios, the company promises that this racing game

will be 'the most realistic rally racing game ever'.

The eleven playable cars, several of which are initially hidden, are some of the best ever seen on a home console system. Little extras, such as using environment mapping on the windows

TGR lets you customize your car!



to give a true sense of reflection, and being able to see the glow of another car's lights shining off your own vehicle add a nice touch of realism.

For those who would like to add a more personal touch to their cars, there is also a paint shop option available. Much like the one in *Rage Racer*, it allows gamers to design their own logos, which can then be pasted onto the vehicles.

Top Gear Rally will contain the obvious racing options, such as a practice and season mode, as well as each of them will provide several short-cuts that crafty racers can take advantage of. Deserts, old riverbeds, and mountainous areas are but a few of the locations that the races run through. Various track conditions such as mud, and water will cause gamers to carefully consider what tires they will need to use.

After mastering a particular



- 1 There will be four different camera views to choose from, such as the standard in-the-car view.
- 2 Racing in the rain requires a whole new level of strategy.
- 3 The rear-view mirror lets you see a passing car, enabling you to stay out in front more easily.

It is amazing how detailed the various tracks are.



Top Gear Rally promises beautifully designed tracks and precise handling.

track, a simple weather change, like snow or rain provides a new challenge.

Top Gear Rally will showcase between four and five different tracks, and each of them will provide several short-cuts that crafty racers can take advantage of. Deserts, old riverbeds, and mountainous areas are but a few of the locations that the races run through. Various track conditions such as mud, and water will cause gamers to carefully consider what tires they will need to use.

While *Top Gear Rally* is still quite a few months from completion, it is turning out to be quite possibly one of the best racing games ever seen on a home console system. If Boss Studios can keep the controls tight and the framerate high, then we could be seeing an actual quality third-party game for the Nintendo 64. Who would have thought?

With hot-looking cars like this, *Top Gear Rally* promises some 'pedal to the metal' thrills!



- 1-2 Racers will have to deal with night racing as well as other weather conditions such as snow and rain.
- 3 Working headlights and variable suspensions are but a few of the extra touches added to make the cars as real as possible.

Final Fantasy VII

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: SONY
DEVELOPER: SQUARESOFT
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Even the bonus games are great in FFVII!

The latest offering in Squaresoft's *Final Fantasy* series is turning out to be one of the best games of all time. Not only does *Final Fantasy VII* have some of the most incredible graphics ever seen on a console system, but it also has a story full of suspense. *Final Fantasy VII* is definitely the darkest and most adult incarnation of the series with a plot that cries 'revenge'.

But it's not just these elements that make *FFVII* such a fine game. The innocent mini-games first started in *Chrono Trigger* have now

become one of the high points in *FFVII*.

When Cloud and his party finally escape from the city of Midgar, they find themselves exposed to a wide open world. As the party ventures on, they will eventually end up at the Golden Saucer, an entertainment center offering a barrage of activities just for the sake of leisure. In the Wonder Room, Cloud and his party can participate in a bunch of different arcade-like games. One of these games is a motorcycle chase sequence in which Cloud, riding a Harley Davidson-ish motorcycle, must

protect his friends riding in a tiny truck. Other

enemies on motor bikes will come ripping from behind and Cloud's only weapon is a baseball bat. This particular game is quite

impressive and moves quite quickly. Another game is the snowboarding

sequence. The player takes control of Cloud and guides him down the slopes while trying to avoid

obstacles like Moogles, snowmen and cactus trees!

After spending some time in the Wonder Room, Cloud and his party can take a stroll to the Chocobo Race Track. Here, Cloud can place bets on different Chocobos with rewards ranging from money to gold. This place also serves as a pivotal point later in the game,



The Golden Saucer is grand in design, with lots of places to explore and visit.



1-2 You won't be able to enter the Golden Saucer by means of Airship or Buggy. Instead, you'll have to take the Sky Ferry.
3 The arcade is luminous, with all sorts of crazy light fixtures and flashing screens.

when the player starts breeding Chocobos.

These mini-games are not only fun, but they rival and, in some ways, surpass other competitors' games in their respective genres. Either way you look at it, *Final Fantasy VII* will be

one incredible game when it hits the US this September. Until then, you can expect to see more of the best coverage from **Ultra Game Players**.

Gamers all over the world can't wait to get their hands on Vincent's latest adventure!



1 With an awesome high-res, goursu-shaded environment, this snowboarding stage leaves all other PSX snowboarding games lost in the blizzard. 2-4 Place your bets and choose your Chocobo wisely. Once you've found one with good stamina and speed attributes, get ready for some serious racing action.

1 This submarine game pits Cloud against a fleet of yellow subel 2 This game has you feeding an overweight Moogle named Mog. 3 This motorcycle chase is very reminiscent of the opening sequence. 4 Other mini-games are less fun, but add to your overall enjoyment.



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Tobal 2

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: SONY
DEVELOPER: SQUARE
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

The sequel to one of last year's deepest fighting games ups the ante

Square's first impressive 3D fighting game, *Tobal No. 1*, returns with a new look and a predictable name. Visually, the game has achieved a much richer look, by giving the characters more polygons for a smoother look and gouraud shading to add depth. The art is being handled by manga giant Akira Toriyama, of *Dragon Ball* fame, who also did all the character and background art for the original.

Tobal 2 is being developed with SCE's yet to be released analog controller, and allows for much more

precise control. The fully 3D battle-grounds now feature projectile attacks and an even greater variety of holds. While the fighting game has undergone some major enhancements, the area that is most intriguing is the revamped Quest mode. Last year's Quest mode was a nice little diversion, but by adding RPG elements, four different environments, and a much deeper story, *Tobal 2* really is two games in one.

Dream Factory, developers of the original and comprised of members from AM2, is once again in charge of development and

look to be breaking new ground once again. The original eight members from the preceding tournament return for the 99th Tobal Number 1 Finals Tournament. They are joined by two new characters: a female galactic patrol officer named Chako

1-2 Two new selectable characters have been added to the game to raise the total to ten.
3-4 The hold system is deeper than ever. You can push, pull, kick, punch, or just throw. Deciding which to pull off can be the difference between a win and a loss.

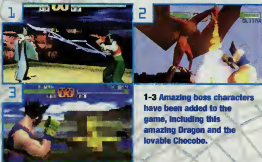
Yutani, and Doctor V, a surgeon. That brings the total of selectable characters to ten, but there have already been five other characters revealed, including *Final Fantasy*'s Chocobo.

The battle system has many enhancements. All characters now have projectile attacks, which add to the gameplay. The smooth special effects even add to the look. From a hold position, characters can pull off a variety of moves, like lifting, mounting, throwing, and hitting. All of the new moves are sure to add an even

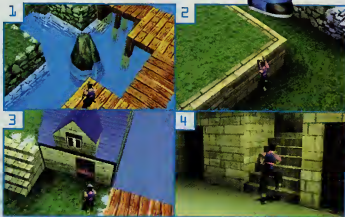


greater depth to the gameplay. The release date for the U.S. is still undetermined, but expect *Tobal 2* to be out this year and expect it to be even better than the original.

All the characters from the original game are back and looking better than ever, like Illgoga here.



1-3 Amazing boss characters have been added to the game, including this amazing Dragon and the lovable Chocobo.



1 The Quest mode now features towns which you have to travel into in order to find the dungeon. 2-3 The 3D terrain should make for some interesting encounters on places like the stairs and near a wall. 4 The four different areas include these ruins, which must be explored.

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Wild 9s

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION, SATURN

PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY

DEVELOPER: SHINY ENTERTAINMENT

RELEASE DATE: 4TH QTR '97

A shiny, new universe (or a new Shiny Universe?) is on its way

Featured in an exclusive, first-look cover story in the November '96 issue of **ULTRA** *Game Players*, *Wild 9s* was to be the first next-generation offering from the creators of *Earthworm Jim*. Well, the world of videogames being the way it is, the game is now scheduled for a fourth quarter release. Shiny Entertainment's first 32-bit game now

looks to be the PlayStation version of *MDK* (see our review of the PC version in this issue) sometime this summer, but if *MDK* is any indication, *Wild 9s* is a game that should be highly anticipated.

With an unprecedented 60,000 hand drawn animations (*Earthworm Jim* had 3,000) *Wild 9s* is the most animated videogame ever. Shiny's

stated purpose is to produce a game that will exceed even the likes of *Super Mario 64* in terms of graphics, control, gameplay and scope. Centered around a young



1 The gameplay looks to be mix of some track-based environments, along with areas where true 3D movement is possible.

3 True to the heritage of its developers, *Wild 9s* appears to be a platform game at its core.

4 With over 60,000 frames of animation and special effects, the game should look extraordinary.

5 Wex doesn't have a gun, but that's a very special glove.

named B'ang who lives inside the powerful glove weapon found by Wex. Despite the new screen shots featured, details regarding gameplay have been few and far between, with only promises of huge 3D environments and a character with extraordinary levels of con-

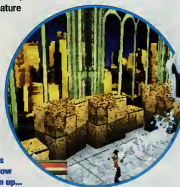
They want a little over-board on the boxes, so let's just blow them up...

trol. If the company making these claims were any other but Shiny, the promises might ring hollow. UGP's initial inclinations are towards an *Earthworm Jim* meets *MDK* game, only better, which sounds intriguing.

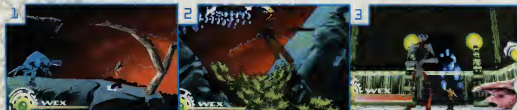
While the game is progressing, there have been significant developments regarding the *Wild 9s* property itself. The Gotham

Group, an LA-based scriptwriters agency, has been signed to pen a series 'bible' and pilot script for a *Wild 9s* animated television show. Previous credits for the Gotham Group include *Batman: The Animated Series*, *Spiderman*, and Disney's *Gargoyles*, to name a few. The series is reported to feature computer generated graphics, the likes of which have never been seen in an animated television series.

Couple the merchandising possibilities with a TV series, and *Wild 9s* may well be the name on every child's lips come Christmas.



Expect to find some characters in compromising positions.



1-2 Enemies like this dinosaur-like creature all have distinct personalities and characteristics (a trade mark of Shiny's games). Too bad the player's just going to toast him anyway. 3 Remember, those shots are still very early, but *Wild 9s* is looking extremely promising.



Spawn

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: SONY CE
DEVELOPER: SONY CE
RELEASE DATE: AUGUST

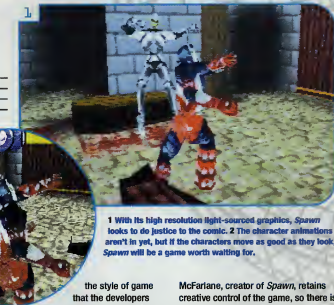
For the uninitiated who are unaware that *Spawn* is the number one selling comic book in America, the story of *Spawn* revolves around the character of Al Simmons. Al was once a deadly government operative who was betrayed by his boss and died a fiery death. Resurrected by Hell to serve as a pawn in the



Demonstrates of Hell run rampant in *Spawn*.

eternal struggle against Heaven. *Spawn* (previously known as Al Simmons) instead has his own agenda of vengeance and retribution, while coming to terms with his new persona and the lingering love for a woman named Wanda.

The PlayStation game itself will be true to the comic book world of *Spawn*, but will not necessarily be bound to any current storyline (or the storyline of the movie coming in August). Gameplay can best be described as a *Tomb Raider*-like, third-person view, exploration game, with a heavy emphasis on one-on-one fighting. The Quest Mode in *Tomb No. 1* is a primitive example of



1 With its high resolution light-sourced graphics, *Spawn* looks to do justice to the comic. 2 The character animations aren't in yet, but if the character moves as good as they look, *Spawn* will be a game worth waiting for.

the style of game that the developers are shooting for. A highly interactive environment and close attention paid to special moves and combos give the title a chance to be the first game to successfully genre-mix.

The game features a over a dozen characters from the comic, with about an additional 30 characters created just for the game. Todd

McFarlane, creator of *Spawn*, retains creative control of the game, so there is every indication that the look and feel of *Spawn* will be faithfully recreated. These early shots show that the game features superb high-res, light-sourced graphics, so the game looks to be technically sound. The only thing that remains to be seen is whether Sony can imbue the game with the quality of gameplay that lives up to the expectations of the throngs of *Spawn* fans.

Flying Saucer

SYSTEM: PC CD-ROM
PUBLISHER: AMERICA ENTERTAINMENT
DEVELOPER: POSTLINEAR ENTERTAINMENT
RELEASE DATE: JUNE

Centered around a character named Boone, *Flying Saucer* chronicles the tale of a guy who steals a UFO from Area 51 in order to locate his girlfriend, Emily, who has been abducted by aliens. Along the way, he stumbles upon a conspiracy between a shadow government agency and the aliens that threaten the fate of

the world, which begs the question, if you had a high performance alien craft, what would you do? Yup, kick some alien ass.

The majority of gameplay in *Flying Saucer* revolves around piloting the alien craft in battles at alien hot spots around the globe. Equipped with a 'gravity engine', the Saucer will be able to hover, quickly change speed and direction, move horizon-

tally and vertically, and turn on a dime. The fact that the player will pilot the UFO in a highly detailed 3D environment should make for entertaining gameplay.

The only concern may be how the gameplay will be balanced to account for the fact that the player possesses a craft superior to the enemies he's fighting. Regardless, a *Flying Saucer* flight sim game is certainly something worth keeping an eye out for.



Helicopters are no match for your saucer's Green Death Ray!



What UFO game is complete without some kind of love interest?



1 Looking down from a Saucer reveals many intriguing structures that summon for further exploration. 2 The game will feature a true 3D world to navigate. 3 *Flying Saucer*'s all new Direct 3D Immediate Mode Terrain Rendering Engine seems to be working well already.



THE SPIDER THAT'S ALSO AN EXTERMINATOR



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Blood

SYSTEM PC

PUBLISHERS GT INTERACTIVE/MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS

DEVELOPERS 3D REALMS

RELEASE DATE: MAY

A classic game engine gets even bloodier

Based on an 'enhanced' version of the classic Build engine used in such games as *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Blood* hopes to take the *Doom* genre by storm with its horror-themed gameplay and its smooth interface.

The premise is pretty simplistic. The gamer plays the role of a general who used to fight for an evil god called Tchernobog. Betrayed and sent back to earth, your only desire is to confront those who have opposed you. Eventually you will face your god once again, but now you're stuck in a frail mortal body.

To assist you in your journey, a nice variety of weapons is provided. Pitch forks, flare guns, and dynamite are but a few of the 12 weapons you will have to learn to use. Each weapon acts differently and requires the gamer to learn



Blood is easily one of the bloodiest and most violent games to ever grace the PC.

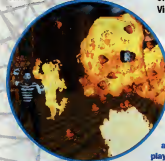
when to best use them. This is a nice change from games such as *Quake*, which required you to use all the weapons pretty much the same way.

The various levels are some of the most interactive yet. Virtually everything can be destroyed. Little extras, such as bullet holes appearing in the walls when you shoot them, provide a nice level of realism. The minor enhancements to the engine include true rooms

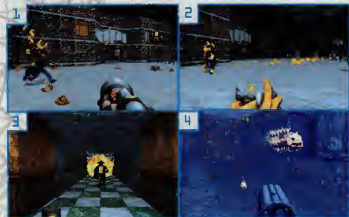
above rooms and real bridges.

Blood also has one of the largest cast of characters ever. There are over 18 different types of monsters for you to destroy. Don't think that it will be easy, either, as most of the enemies are intelligent and can easily set traps for you.

While *Blood* will have some serious competition, it looks to have enough features and extras to make it a serious contender. If the quality of the shareware can be carried over to the full retail version, then this game may be able to provide the tired *Doom* genre with a much needed shot of adrenaline.



An enhanced version of the Build engine helps to keep the action intense and the gameplay intense.



1-3 There are plenty of different weapons to be found in *Blood*. Learning when to use them is very important.

4 There are many unique environments to explore, including underwater. Watch out for those home sets!

EIGHT LEGS AND HEAVILY ARMED.



You're trapped in the body of a cyborg spider. Creeping down drain pipes. Crawling on ceilings. Wandering through



over 30 levels in six 3D worlds. You're picking up missile launchers, slashers and other deadly weapons as you



fight cyber rats, mantises and wasps. Needless to say, you're not an itty bitty spider.



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PlayStation

Critical Depth

SYSTEM: PC CD-ROM, PLAYSTATION

PUBLISHER: SINGLETRAC

DEVELOPER: SINGLETRAC

RELEASE DATE: FALL

As much as any company, Singletac has been associated with the PlayStation since launch, with big-selling games like *Twisted Metal* and *Warhawk* under its belt. Until now, all the Singletac PlayStation games have been published by Sony, but *Critical Depth* now marks Singletac's first entry into the world of publishing.

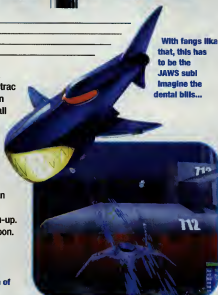
Critical Depth is a term which describes the depth at which a submarine gets squished

into a little lump of tin and corned beef. As you might have guessed, this is a submarine-based action game, with more than a passing resemblance to *Warhawk*. This time though, the producers have gone with the heavy character element found in *Twisted Metal* and *Jet Moto*, so the sub and submariner you choose vastly affect the outcome of the game.

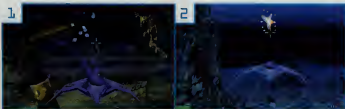
In style the game is very much a shooter. You have to blow up the other characters, as well as

some pretty nasty undersea creatures. As with all Singletac games, there are fifty million options. Seek and destroy, all out war, Internet play (in the PC version, naturally) to name but a few.

Singletac still has plenty of work to do on this title between now and release, but right now, it's an attractive, atmospheric and graphically pretty shoot-'em-up. We'll bring you an update soon.



The subs all have various weaponry and capabilities, with each craft resembling a different aquatic creature.



1 Handling is affected by the weight and depth of the water, as is your vision.

2 PlayStation light-sourcing capabilities display reflection and refraction, just like real water.

Need For Speed

SYSTEM: PC, SATURN, PLAYSTATION

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS

DEVELOPER: EA STUDIOS, CANADA

RELEASE DATE: JUNE

Electronic Arts is still busy at work trying to create the ultimate driving game in *Need For Speed 2*. We recently got in an early alpha version of the game and have been giving it a test run. According to the developers, the game is running at half of the frame-rate that the finished version will run at, and it's already reasonably smooth. The model for the McLaren F1 and Ferrari are the only cars available, but both are done with much more detail than in the original.

A few of the international tracks are available and it's obvious that the polygon count is up significantly from the original. Another interesting feature is the ability to drive anywhere on the road and even take shortcuts through the woods. At this early stage, it's difficult to tell exactly how *NFS II* will stack up against arcade racers like *Rage Racer*, but if the frame rate and art can be fixed, this could be a winner.



1 The McLaren F1 is an amazing vehicle that none of us will ever drive, but in *NFS II*, we get a chance to wreck it real good. 2 High speed racing through traffic is always a treat and a key to the success of *NFS II*.

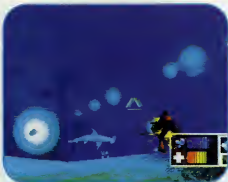


4-5 The tracks feature more polygons and a greater 3D look, with more ups and downs.

6 Watch out for that oil slick! *NFS II* promises to have a ton of high speed challenges!

Treasures Of The Deep

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: VIRGIN
DEVELOPER: BLACK OPS
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER



The newest trend in PlayStation software seems to be the underwater action game. Virgin is following suit with the most impressive looking one yet.

Treasures Of The Deep allows you to control eight different subs and use a host of

The amazing sharks will even feast on your enemies if they are bleeding, setting up some gruesome strategies.

weapons to destroy sharks, whales, divers, and other subs. The graphics are absolutely gorgeous, with the detail in the sharks and characters being unmatched. Perhaps the best graphical treat of all are the death animations of your enemies.

Nothing can quite compare to the blossoming cloud of blood that surrounds your victims. The camera choices allow for a first-person perspective or even a *Tomb Raider*-style third-person perspective. No matter which camera angle is

used, *Treasures* is one really beautiful game.

Treasures already looks to be one of the best PlayStation games coming and, with added depth, it could be one of the biggest surprises of the year.



1-2 The different arenas help to make the game a different experience every time.



The variety in enemies makes for a greater depth of play.

Mace: The Dark Age

SYSTEM: ARCADE
PUBLISHER: MIDWAY
DEVELOPER: ATARI GAMES
RELEASE DATE: JUNE

Atari games lives on with another impressive arcade game to follow up *San Francisco Rush*. *Mace: The Dark Age* also runs on the twin-chipset Voodoo graphics card and it looks amazing.

Mace is a 3D weapon-based fighting game in the same vein as Namco's *Soul Blade*, but several strategic changes should make the game quite different. The most interesting feature is that instead of ringouts or walls, the fighting arena is surrounded by spikes, quicksand,

and fire that don't kill the fighters, but injure them until they get back in the ring. This completely changes the strategy of the game and takes care of the cheap ringouts of some games. The eleven selectable characters in the game range from belly dancers to monks to samurai warriors, who can slash, throw, and parry. If the game finishes up as strong as it's started, it could be the first U.S. developed fighting game to get any respect in Japan.



This stage is surrounded by a wall of fire, which causes damage whenever you hit it, creating a host of strategic moves.



1 The graphics are amazing, with smooth animation and some crisp polygonal characters. 2-3 The usual throw moves are included, along with fancy acrobatics that should make *Mace* a great title. 4 Scantly clad Amazons should make this game a big hit!

Uprising

SYSTEM: PC
PUBLISHER: 3DO
DEVELOPER: CYCLONE
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

The art of war just keeps getting more entertaining

With the real time strategy elements of *Red Alert*, combined with the first-person shooting action of *Quake*, Cyclone has taken an incredible concept and is in the process of creating what is likely to be one of the better strategy titles this year. *Uprising* places

players in control of a mobile command center called a 'wraith', from which players fight and command other units in a battle against enemy forces.

The key to the game is establishing bases, called citadels, at various set locations. Once a citadel is established, the player will begin

accumulating energy. Energy is the primary form of resource and is necessary for building factories, units and for repairing or even replacing your barracks. Each citadel location has a varying number of buildable quads. On each of the quads, players may build one of a number of different types of factories, each of which builds a different type of unit.

Units available are infantry, tanks, AVs (jets), and bombers. In addition to basic units, as players move through missions, it is



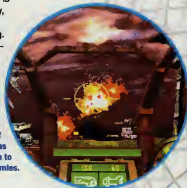
possible to invest in technology which allows for better units to be made. For example, a Class Two bomber may be faster and slightly more maneuverable than a class 1 bomber. A Class Three bomber may have flares that it can drop to counter SAM attacks. As you invest more in a unit's technology, the better the unit becomes.

As factories turn out units, they can be teleported to any point a player desires. So, if a player is engaging a series of tanks, he can teleport in a bomber to airstrike them. If a player is taking out an enemy infantry factory, he can call in some infantry to set satchel charges to blow the building. Missions range from simply destroy-

ing the enemy to more specific directives, such as recovering an object or even escorting transports through hot zones.

Essentially, it is impossible to play the game solely as a shooter, and impossible to play the game solely as a strategy game. Both methods are required and the combination is excellent. Luckily for PlayStation owners, a PlayStation version of *Uprising* is slated for release at some point in 1998.

From inside the cockpit of your wraith, you will have a number of special weapons with which to smite your enemies.



These wraiths from the beautiful opening sequence promise death from above.



1 Your citadels are equipped with their own gun turrets. If you so desire, you can temporarily leave your wraith, and take control of any citadel turret to fend off enemy bombers and tanks.

2 Cyclone is considering including a 3D level editor in the final product for players to create their own missions.



Shining The Holy Ark

SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SEGA
RELEASE DATE: JUNE

Though last year's *Shining Wisdom* (published by Working Designs in the U.S.) was touted as the 32-bit debut of the *Shining Force* series, if you dismissed the slightly enhanced graphics, the game had 16-bit written all over it. Early indications are that *Shining the Holy Ark* does the genre right, and just in the nick of time for the Saturn, considering the impending arrival of *Final Fantasy VII* to the PlayStation this fall.

Sporting a more mature storyline in addition to a whole new visual style, the concept for *Holy Ark* was reportedly locked away in Sega's vaults until the hardware technology had reached a point to make the game viable. One look at the detailed polygonal char-

acters and exquisite environments and it appears that the game was worth the wait. Gameplay has also shifted away from *Shining Wisdom's* top view, *Zelda*-like, action style to a more traditional turn-based RPG.

Of course, the storyline will ultimately determine how good *Shining the Holy Ark* will be, but for now, there is one more reason for RPG fans in general, and Saturn owners in particular, to get excited.

Stunning 3D graphics are used to create the characters and environments of *Shining the Holy Ark*.



1 Unlike *Shining Wisdom's* action oriented gameplay, *STHA* appears to utilize a traditional turn-based battle system.

2 Detailed, polygon-based enemies are waiting to pounce at every turn.

3 After a number of 'hold-over' titles, true next-generation RPGs finally seem to be arriving.

W.A.R., Inc.

SYSTEM: PC CD-ROM
PUBLISHER: INTERACTIVE MAGIC
DEVELOPER: OPTIC SOFTWARE
RELEASE DATE: MAY

The first real time strategy offering from a company that knows strategy games, *W.A.R. Inc.*, puts the player at the helm of a futuristic mercenary corporation that is 'hired' to defeat rebel groups around the world. The game actually requires the gamer to assume the dual role of a Commander-in-Chief and CEO by requiring the management of business functions, like investment,

research, and design production, in addition to the standard battlefield responsibilities.

The competitive advantage that *W.A.R. Inc.* enjoys over other strat games is the ability to actually design the weapons that are used in battle. Over a million weapon variants are possible, possessing such firepower as machine guns, hellfire missiles, plasma accelerators, to rail guns and more. The single player mode offers over 20 campaigns, with up to three mission objectives, each utilizing 20 basic customizable units.

Additional features include a battlefield editor, a random map generator, and support for head-to-head modem play, as well as IPX network play for up to six people. *W.A.R. Inc.* is a real time strategy game that should appeal to the novice and veteran alike.

With its expanded gameplay elements, *W.A.R. Inc.* looks to be the next big thing in real time strategic wargames.



1 The most intriguing aspect of the game is the ability to personally design over a million different weapons.

2 Each campaign has as many as three mission objectives with the ability to command up to four strike forces.



Sonicwings Assault

SYSTEM: NINTENDO 64
PUBLISHER: VIDEO SYSTEMS
DEVELOPER: PARADIGM ENTERTAINMENT
RELEASE DATE: FALL '97

The Nintendo 64 flies the unfriendly skies!

Despite many gamers' complaints of the slow arrival of games on Nintendo 64, especially in the face of PlayStation's massive game onslaught, many upcoming Nintendo games are likely to meet up to its PR line. One quality game that looks promising is *Sonicwings Assault*.

The first combat flying game for Nintendo 64, *Sonicwings Assault* is Video Systems' first Nintendo 64 title in the market. An N64 follow-up to the

successful *Sonicwings* series, *Sonicwings Assault* offers single- and two-player modes, combining air combat simulation and 'shoot-em up' action, much like Namco's *Air Combat 22*.

The airplanes are based on real military planes, like the F-14 Tomcat, and can move in full 3D. Equipped with neo-futuristic and real weapons, the game provides four kinds from which to choose. The main weapons are comprised of Vulcan cannons and machine guns, all of which have unlimited

ammunition. From there, players have access to heat-seeking missiles and rockets,

defense weapons, like missiles jammers and explosive mines, which protect you from the enemy's heat-seeking projectiles, and finally, specialized weapons unique to the particular plane you've chosen, and designed for level-end bosses.

What's cool is that the game packs ten intense levels, each with a wide range of mission objectives, obstacles, and opponents. It's known that the Japanese version features the Tokyo government building and the Tokyo Tower as well, and it's high likely these will be replaced with familiar landmarks like the Empire State Building when the game reaches the U.S.

At least five of the ten stages are in development as we speak: 'Above the Clouds' takes place high above the clouds and requires RADAR usage; the City Stage sees Tokyo (also possibly subject to change) being attacked by unidentified troops that you'll pick off amid crammed skyscrapers; in the Wilderness Stage, you'll fight a mobile fortress in a canyon in Arizona; in the Sea Stage, you'll encounter dogfights and battle a gigantic submarine boss, and in the



Arctic Sea Stage, featuring gorgeous auroras and scenery, the fights become more and more difficult.

Taking lessons from different genres, Paradigm is creating a system that benefits players by communicating with the fighters in your formation. The three planes you didn't choose from, fly with you and the pilots talk to each other, asking for help or warning you about upcoming obstacles, or incoming enemies. You'll hear actual audio voices while you're flying. Occasionally, they'll ask for help, and by helping your

teammates in a pinch, they'll return the favor by joining you in attacks against level bosses.

Contracts currently are being discussed as to who will publish the game in the West, but Paradigm Entertainment said the title is expected to be acquired, and is most likely to arrive by the end of this year.



1 Full 3D maneuvering enables players to go wherever and whenever they want. Barrel rolls are not an unusual sight, either. 2 Just the sight of this title screen is enough to get our pulses pounding!



TO HELL WITH YOU.



Only the N64 could
handle this game.

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Dark Rift

SYSTEM: NINTENDO 64, PC
PUBLISHER: VIC TOKAI
DEVELOPER: KRONOS
RELEASE DATE: 2ND QTR '97

Vic Tokai's new brawler comes out swinging!

Maybe one of the most peculiar developments in the N64 line-up is the console's tremendous vacuum of games, and in particular, fighting games. Where in Jimmy Carter-Georgia are they? *Mortal*

Kombat Trilogy and *Killer Instinct Gold* serve their purposes, especially in the old, outdated 2D fighter category, but no more than three companies have really stepped up to the challenge yet (that's Hudson with *Dual Heroes*, Atari Games with *Mace*, and Vic Tokai with *Dark Rift*).

Vic Tokai and Kronos, not a pair carrying a long line of brilliant fighting titles, have paired up to create the first full 3D fighter on N64, due out this spring. Ted Warnock, the game's animation director, told *ULTRA Game Players* why the game will outshine its former fighting endeavors. '*Dark Rift* is going to be very fast and responsive,' he said in a phone interview. 'Our N64 engine runs at 60 frames per second (not fields, he assured us), and we've spent an enormous amount of time working on the gameplay in an effort to get it right.'

Dark Rift features as many as nine characters and two bosses, who side-

Nikki has got looks that kill, as well as a *Star Gladiator*-type weapon!

step into or out of a 3D field of play, battling with an arsenal of

weapons, various projectiles, and fighting combinations reminiscent of Namco's *Tekken* series. In fact, *Dark Rift* also resembles Namco's *Soul Edge* (or *Soul Blade* on PSX), in its get-up attack combos, and defensive combinations. *Dark Rift* promises more, however. Chain combinations — specific successive moves that create a threatening offensive attack — numerous throw moves, and finishing moves complete the list of attacks. Screen-shots from the alpha stages present a colorful, fantastic environment, and a bizarre menagerie of human and alien characters who vie to win the 'Tournament' for possession of the Master Key.

Natural movement is important to fighting games, and the characters in *Dark Rift* should move 'more like

human beings than comic book characters,' claims Warnock. 'Most of our stuff is optically motion-captured. Our characters have a tendency to feel like they were kind of alive,' he added.

It's curious why more prominent companies haven't stepped forward to fill the fighting void, especially since Nintendo itself isn't presenting any real formidable competition. *Dark Rift* is taking the first step in showing gamers how to fight in 3D on N64, and it's more than likely that Vic Tokai is pleased to have the first 3D fighter available. In fact, it's unusually rare. With only two 2D fighters already out, and only a few 3D fighters planned, *Dark Rift* is in the perfect opportunistic spot to take the 3D brawling crown.



1 Not your average dude, Gore can inflict serious damage with one blow, but he's slower than other opponents. 2-3 Morphix looks to satisfy players who want something different from their fighters, as he changes and morphs to defeat his enemies.



1 Nikki goes in for quick multiple slashes, while Aaron takes in the little cuts in bruises, waiting for the perfect time to pull a devastating blow. 2 It's difficult to look at sexy Nikki and not think of a similar character, with ironically, similar weapons, from *Star Gladiator*. 3 Atmospheric backgrounds and sci-fi influenced artwork is prominent in *Dark Rift*.

BRAHMA Force™

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JALECO.



COMING SOON TO PLAYSTATION

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THIS SOFTWARE IS COMPATIBLE WITH PLAYSTATION GAME CONSOLES WITH THE NTSC/UC DESIGNATION.

Duke Nukem 3D

SYSTEM: SATURN
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SEGA/LOBBYTHY
RELEASE DATE: SUMMER '97

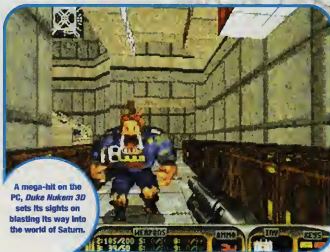
A butt kickin', wise crackin' Saturn game with an attitude

Not just another *Doom*-clone (at least to fans of the PC game), *Duke Nukem 3D* is a first-person shooter that is noted for the wise-cracking, bad ass attitude of its main character. The player assumes the role of Duke Nukem, a mercenary

who must run, jump, swim, and jet pack through various levels in order to save Los Angeles from evil aliens.

Gameplay centers around standard first-person shooter fare, with the player navigating a maze of rooms and corridors while trying to kill everything in sight. With an arsenal of weapons including pipe bombs, chain guns, rocket propelled grenades and a doubled barreled monstrosity called the 'Devastator', *Duke Nukem* offers 28 levels of gameplay, including one all new Sega Saturn level. The levels are filled with nine different types of enemies and are littered with special tools and power-ups that must be utilized to accomplish missions. Enhanced sound for the Saturn version of the game also creates an immersive environment. For Net Link owners, *Duke Nukem 3D* for Saturn will allow up to four people to participate in head-to-head combat.

Even this early on, it appears that all of *Duke's* gameplay and personality will make the transition to the Saturn unscathed. What is particularly appealing about the game, is that the game engine and graphics are noticeably improved over the PC version of the game. Based on a new incarnation of the Powerslave engine, *Duke Nukem 3D* for the Saturn looks to be the fastest, smoothest running first-person shooter ever for a

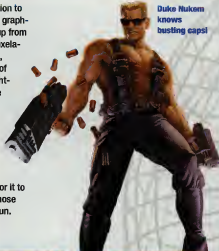


A mega-hit on the PC, *Duke Nukem 3D* sets its sights on blasting its way into the world of Saturn.

home-console system. In addition to how well the game moves, the graphics are also a significant step up from the PC version. There is little pixelation and everything has a crisp, high-res appearance. The use of light sourcing and real time lighting effects just make the game look even prettier.

Although first-person shooters of the PC world are flooding home consoles, few can truly be considered top notch conversions. *Duke Nukem 3D* offers enough enhancements for it to deserve serious attention for those looking for a little destructive fun.

Duke Nukem knows busting caps!



1-2 Though the environments should look familiar to *Duke* fans, the Saturn version does boast enhanced graphics.

3 Advanced light sourcing technology and real time lighting effects make this the best looking *Duke* game ever.

4 Any game that lets you kick people has got to be cool.

1 Let's get this straight — you want to kill land boy! 2-3 What are you waiting for? Blast 'em!! 4-5 A derivative of the Powerslave engine, the game allows for smooth, fast gameplay that brings home the intensity of the death and destruction.



Release List

• NOTE: All release dates are subject to change at any time

May

PlayStation

Ball Blazer Champ - LucasArts
Battle Arena Toshinden 3
- Playmates Int. Ent.
Battlesport - Acclaim
Broken Helix - Konami
Darklight Conflict - EA
Discworld 2 - Psygnosis
Dynasty Warriors - Koei
Golden Nugget - Virgin
Hexen - GT Interactive
MDK - Playmates Ent. Inc.
MVP College Football
- Data East
Dverblood - Electronic Arts
Shadoan - Ready Soft
Spawn - Sony CE
The Fallen - Psygnosis
Wild Arms - Sony CE

Saturn

Albert Odyssey - Working Designs
Bedlam - GT Interactive
Darklight Conflict
- Electronic Arts
Dragon's Lair 2 - Ready Soft
Extreme Pinball - EA
Fighters Megamix - Sega
Pinky and the Brain - Konami
Super Motorcross - Acclaim
Ten Pin Alley - ASC Games
Wing Commander 3 - Virgin

PC

Armored Fist 2 - NovaLogic
Betray Antara (Win 95) - Sierra
Darklight Conflict
- Electronic Arts
Dungeon Keeper - EA
Fallen Haven - Int. Magic
Galactic Mirage (Win 95) - Virgin
MDK - Playmates Ent. Inc.
Moto Racer - BMG Interactive
Space Bar - SegaSoft
The 11th Hour (Win 95) - Virgin
Ultima Online (Win 95)
- Electronic Arts
VR Baseball - Interplay
W.A.R. Inc. - Interactive Magic

SNES

Brunswick's World - T+Hq
Timon & Pumba - T+Hq

June

Nintendo 64

Clay Fighter 63 1/3 - Interplay
Dark Rift - Vic Tokai
Hexen 64 - GT Interactive
Perfect Striker - Konami
Robotron X - Midway Home Ent.
Star Fox 64 - Nintendo
War Gods
- Williams Entertainment

PlayStation

Aaron vs. Ruth - Mindscape
Alien Striker - Atlas Software
Bedlam - GT Interactive
Clay Fighter III - Interplay
Demon Driver - Philips
Killing Time - Acclaim
Marvel Super Heroes - Capcom
Mega Man X4 - Capcom
Mortal Kombat 2 - Acclaim
Near Death - Atlas Software
Necrodome - Mindscape
Need For Speed 2 - EA
Dnside Soccer - Amer. Technos
Pinky and the Brain - Konami
Sign of the Sun - Koei
Street Fighter Collection
- Capcom
Swiv - Interplay
The 11th Hour - Virgin
The Lost World
- Dreamworks Interactive

Time Crisis - Namco
TNN Bass '97 - ASC Games
War Gods - Williams Ent.

Saturn

Alien Striker - Atlas Software
Broken Helix - Konami
Demon Driver - Philips
Descent - Interplay
Duke Nukem 3D - Sega
Killing Time - Acclaim
Manx TT - Sega
Marvel Super Heroes - Capcom
Mega Man X4 - Capcom
MVP College Football
- Data East

NBA Basketball - Konami
Sacred Pools - SegaSoft
Shining the Holy Ark - Sega
Sky Target - Sega
Street Fighter Collection
- Capcom
The Lost World
- Dreamworks Interactive
Ultimate Football - Sega
World Series Baseball '98
- Sega

PC

Blood - 3D Realms
Dark Reign (Win 95) - Activision
Deathtrap DNG (Win 95)
- EIDOS Interactive
Flying Saucer - AnyRiver Ent
Galactic Conquest
- The 3DD Company
Meat Puppet
- Playmates Int. Ent.
Need For Speed 2 - EA
Road Moscow
- Encore Software
Unreal - GT Interactive
688i Hunter/Killer - EA

July

Nintendo 64

Robotech: Crystal Dreams
- Philips
Tetrisphere - Nintendo

PlayStation

Down in the Dumps - Philips
Legends Football '97 - Accolade
Ninja - EIDOS Interactive
QAD - Philips

Saturn

Legends Football '97 - Accolade
Magic Knight Rayearth
- Working Designs
Ninja - EIDOS Interactive
VR Baseball - Interplay
VR Pool - Interplay

PC

Ultima Online (Win 95) - EA

August

Nintendo 64

GoldenEye 007 - Nintendo
Mission: Impossible - Ocean

PlayStation

Colliderz - ASC Games
Dungeon & Dragons Arcade
Collection - Capcom
GT Football - GameTek
Red Asphalt - Interplay

Saturn

Colliderz - ASC Games
Dragon's Lair 2 - Ready Soft
Dungeon & Dragons Arcade
Collection - Capcom
Lunar: Director's Cut
- Working Designs
Quake - Sega
Resident Evil - Capcom
Shadoan - Ready Soft

PC

Lands of Lore 2 - Virgin
NFL Legends '97 - Accolade



Calendar of Events

IMAGINE GAMES NETWORK

Our Affiliates:



www.3rdgeneration.com



www.gaming-enthusiast.com



www.vldgames.com



www.metro.net/slikatel



www.psnation.com



www.segasages.com

www.sega-saturn.com

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www.sega-saturn.com



www.vh1home.com



www.videogamers.com



www.evansville.net/~tyrant21/duke.htm

THE ULTIMATE GAMER'S PAGE
FROM GAMES 64 TO THE WARRIOR & MORE...

www.escape.ca/~tpeters/gamers.html

Thurs MAY 1



Core Interview
PSXPower interviews the guys at Core to find out about their upcoming games, including Ninja and Tomb Raider 2.

Fri MAY 2



Hand Held Gaming
Ultra Game Players takes a look at portable game, past, present and future. Classics from the past and new ideas for tomorrow.

Mon MAY 5



Beat Doom 64
Don't miss the Doom 64 Walk-through and Strategy Guide. A complete, downloadable guide through all 30 levels of Midway's most recent game.

Tue MAY 6



boot Reviews
All Boot's latest reviews will be launched onto bootNet.com. Make sure you're ahead of the PC market.

Wed MAY 7



The Perfect Game
You vote for the greatest game of all time in Ultra Game Players Special Poll. We'll pool your votes, decide on a winner and let other readers see why you voted for the "ultimate game".

Thur MAY 8



The History of SEGA SaturnWorld
chronicles the recent chapters. From the 32X to Virtua Fighter 3

Fri MAY 9



Game Censorship Forum
What role, if any, should the government play in the gaming industry? Voice your opinions in a Special Forum set up by Next Generation Online.

Mon MAY 12



Have Your Say
How would you improve PSXPower? Send us your suggestions into this Special Forum and you could win \$300 worth of PSX games.

Tue MAY 13



IGN Debate
The editors at N64.com, SaturnWorld, and PSXPower debate the most recent issues affecting their consoles. Text and streaming audio versions available on all three sites.

Wed MAY 14



Where is M2?
Ultra Game Player's expose on the rise, fall, rise and whatever of the most elusive console the gaming world has never seen.

Thur MAY 15



Talking PC Games
Chat with the PC Gamer Online editors in the IGN Palace.

Fri MAY 16



Win Cool Stuff
SaturnWorld is giving away plenty of Sega goodies in this mammoth contest.



www.next-generation.com



www.ultragp.com



www.n64.com



www.bootnet.com

Every day, one of the seven sites in the Imagine Games Network hosts a special event. These include interviews, chat forums, downloads and extra features. And they're all absolutely free.

All you have to do is to check the times and the dates of the events, and make sure you're there to enjoy them. You'll find the urls of all the sites at the bottom of this page.

MAY

Mon MAY 19



Monster Demo Deployment

Five new demos for PC and two for Macintosh will be added to Next Generation Online's ever-growing demo section.



Contest

Affiliate site PlayStation Nation will hold a week long contest to win a copy of Rally Cross and a Negcon.

Tue MAY 20



Five Day Compo

The N64.com FIFA Soccer '97 Contest starts today. It's a five-day event with five different questions, in which the winners receive a free FIFA Soccer '97 cartridge

Wed MAY 21



Exclusive Preview

Sneak Peak - PSXPower takes an exclusive look at one of the hottest new games. Screen shots and movies available for download. This is the big one!

Thur MAY 22



Duff Game Systems

Jaguar, 3DO, Vectrex - they're gone but not forgotten. Enjoy Ultra Game Player's huge feature exposing the lost systems and the games you'd all forgotten. Why did they fail? Where are they now? Where can you still buy one?

Fri MAY 23



PC 3D Board Exploration

What's the best 3D board for you? Next Generation Online explores some of the new entries to the market.

Mon MAY 26



boot Previews

See a panoply of Boot previews on bootNet.com. For PC addicts only.

Tue MAY 27



Tour a Major Game House

Take an interactive tour with PSXPower of one of the industry's biggest games companies. Movies, screen shots, and text available.

Wed MAY 28



Saturn Sports

Get a complete look at the Sega sports world with SaturnWorld's in-depth feature.

Thur MAY 29



Challenge the Team

Play X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter against the PC Gamer editors (details will be announced on PCGamer.com).

Fri MAY 30



Mid-Year Round-up

N64.com analyzes and critiques the games from January-June 1997, and forecasts what's in store for in the upcoming months.



PSXPower keeps you up-to-date with the latest news and information about the PlayStation and Sony. Updated daily with the hottest previews, unbiased reviews and in-depth features, you won't find better PlayStation coverage anywhere on the Web.

All events begin at 6pm PST



WCWTM VS THE WORLD



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wrestling games..." EGM '97



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Lex Luger



Dean Malenko



Eric Guerrero



Ric Flair



Chris Benoit

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RAVIEWS

Welcome to the most comprehensive reviews section anywhere.

We know that a lot of you out there think we've got it easy; playing all the latest games on all the latest systems, but you've got to remember that this is a magazine, so there are all kinds of time restrictions and deadlines. If you worked here, you'd have to put up with all of the planning meetings, which always seem to start with the prayer to Chris' purple cape (yes, it's true...). Then, after you get your assignment,

you'd have Bill (Evil Bill, not the rarely seen Really Nice Bill) screaming at you every day. Most of the time, he'd be yelling at you because you were late in turning in copy, but there are those few unsettling times when he just yells at you for no reason, or at least for reasons known only to Bill. We've found that, at these times, it's best to just look at the floor and mutter 'Damn right, Sarge!' a bunch of times. Now, you still wanna work here?

INSIDE THE SCORE-BOX

We pride ourselves on having the best, most comprehensive scoring system in the biz. Here's how the formula works:

- **GRAPHICS** How a game looks is only a small part of the formula, but an important one. Great graphics can pull the player into a world and make the experience seem all the more real. *Weighted by 4.*
- **MUSIC** Again, music won't make or break a game, but if the soundtrack moves you in an RPG, or gets your heart pumping in a fighting game, it adds to the overall appeal. *Weighted by 2.*
- **SOUND EFFECTS** Good sound effects can actually help you to 'feel' the game better. Just imagine how much less of an impact a heavy punch would make if it only made a small 'ick' on contact. *Weighted by 2.*
- **INTERACTION** How well does the game respond to your commands? How much influence do you have over what's going on? *Weighted by 4.*
- **BALANCE** Is the game childishly easy one level, then frustratingly hard the next? Does your opponent have an unfair advantage? When you want to save, do you have to wait an hour back to the village? *Weighted by 4.*
- **DEPTH** Ever brought a game, fallen in love with it

the first hour, only to beat it in two hours? A great game will take a long time to finish, and offer plenty of reasons to come back for more. *Weighted by 4.*

• **EXTRAS** Did the game's programmers go for that 'little extra', tossing in codes, hidden items, secret screens, or other added bonuses? *Weighted by 1.*

• **PRESENTATION** Does the game create a world that draws you in? Do the intro screens and menus reinforce this environment? *Weighted by 1.*

• **INNOVATION** A game can be loads of fun without offering anything totally new, but the classics are always the trendsetters. *Weighted by 1.*

• **RATING** The total sum of all the categories, divided by 23.



The ULTRA AWARD

When a game makes it through our grueling review system and still comes out with at least a 9.0, it earns our **ULTRA Award**. This is our guarantee that you'll love these games, so don't miss 'em!

RATING

The system is the result of hours of gameplay and endless toil, resulting in the most in-depth (and, uh... complex) rating in the industry.

1.0 Extraordinary	8.0-8.9 Very Good	6.0-6.9 Average	4.0-4.9 Seriously Flawed
9.0-9.9 Ultra	7.0-7.9 Good	5.0-5.9 Lacking	0.0-3.9 Unforgivable



REVIEW

PC CD-ROM



コンピューターゲーム



MDK

A PC game to Murder, Death, Kill for...

As long-time readers of this magazine may have noted, prior to our incarnation as **ULTRA Game Players**, there was generally little affection directed by **GAME PLAYERS** editors to games on the PC 'platform'. Whether it was the sub-standard graphics and sound, cumbersome control interface, or (must likely) the frustrating array of challenges to get a game running properly, PCs just didn't seem to offer the convenience, affordability, and

enjoyment offered by home console systems. What's the point of this major harangue? Well, the times they are a changin' and, with games like **MDK** coming down the pipe, any true gamer can no longer ignore what the PC world has to offer.

The most noticeable drawback of arcade-style games on the PC has been the quality of the graphics and animation. Even now, too many games require that a gamer possess the hottest, latest, PC hardware (with a kick-ass 3D graphics accelerator to boot) in order to get the game to look and perform anything near what is the expected standard on the home-consoles. **MDK** still requires at least a Pentium 90, but beyond that, the gamer can expect a top notch game in terms of the resolution, beauty, and fluidity of the graphics. There are

numerous moments in **MDK** when the player is simply blown away by the vast environments that maintain detail far off into the distance. A battle-suit adorned character named Kurt infiltrates, traverses, and fights his way through these environments with a level control and smoothness previously only possessed by Lara Croft of **Tomb Raider** fame. Kurt even has the advantage when it comes to the speed at which he travels through and interacts with the environment.

Regardless of how good **MDK** looks, Shiny Entertainment has always been noted for their excellence in gameplay design.

Though this game is their first venture into both the worlds of PCs and 3D gaming, **MDK** succeeds for the most part in offering tight, balanced gameplay, despite the challenges proffered by huge 3D environments. The 60 levels of gameplay, spread out over six different enemy mobile mining cities, are filled with awe-inspiring silos, challenging enemies and bosses, and an armory's worth of destructive weapons. **MDK** offers intense, frenetic blast-fests that recall the likes of **Doom** while offering

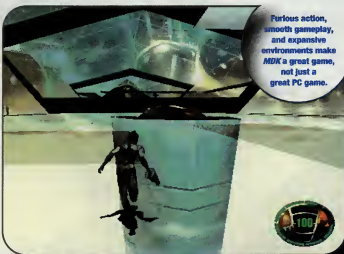
additional strategic facets to consider with its first-person 'sniper mode'. Add in aspects such as puzzle elements and the tactical possibilities offered by the huge 3D environments and **MDK** quickly becomes the thinking man's massacre game.

However, great looks and exhilarating gameplay aren't the only things that **MDK** brings to the table. Perhaps what puts the game over the top is the infamous Shiny 'touch'. Shiny Entertainment litter their games with style, personality, and humor, which always seem to enhance the gaming experience by making the game slightly different, a tad more special, and a lot more fun. Touches



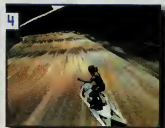
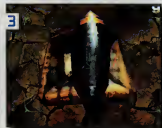
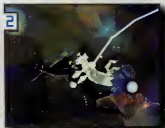
REQUIREMENTS

- IBM PC
- Pentium 90 or Higher
- Windows 95 or DOS
- SVGA
- 16MB RAM
- EX CD-ROM Drive



Levels aren't just horizontally huge. Be prepared to go up and up, and then come down using the breathtaking ribbon-chute. What a rush!

1 Each level begins with a recon through the atmosphere. 2 A canine buddy comes to the rescue when a mission is completed. 3 Occasional look-down bombing missions help to diminish enemy strength prior to infiltration. 4 Yes, there's even a little snowboarding. Shiny threw the kitchen sink into **MDK**. Hey, wait a minute, that was in **Earthworm Jim**.



SNIPER MODE

What separates *MDK* from other third-person perspective action games is the ability to switch to a first-person 'Sniper Mode' on the fly. Thanks to the game's high resolution graphics, the player can then zoom the camera view in to a target far off in the distance. Three in-helmet 'Bullet Cam' displays allow the player to follow the trajectory of his shots. This is a silent, efficient, and deadly mode of operation, but be prepared to switch out of sniper mode quickly after disposing of an enemy (Friends of the deceased may happen to notice that the dearly departed is missing a head for some curious reason.).



1 PC gamers can enjoy such exquisite graphics effects as transparencies and reflections even without a 3D graphics accelerator. 2 The background graphics and textures can look a little pixelated on occasion, but in the heat of the battle, the *MDK* gamer just won't care.

like 'The World's Smallest Nuclear Bomb', a dog-piloted bomber offering air support, and an inflatable decoy doll are the little things that show the good nature, care, and extra effort that is lacking from far too many games. A dark, atmospheric game like *MDK* could have easily been just another generic gore-filled videogame if not for these small, but important, aspects.

If there are any complaints about the game, it is in some basic fundamental design elements. Despite the expansive 3D nature of the play arenas, there is a definite track-like progression to events. The omnipotent hand of the devel-

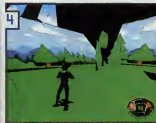
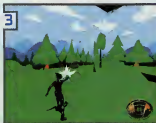
oper always seems present in the background, as the game's basic structure relies on solving challenges in one area before progressing to the next pre-determined area. The challenges themselves also seem to be designed around discovering one particular solution instead of encouraging the gamer to innovate and explore alternatives. The problem here lies in the juxtaposition of fundamental 2D gameplay elements within the less restricted confines of the 3D world. Thanks to the strength of the immediate gameplay, these more subtle aspects of the game's design are never grating, but a more thorough exploration of the possibilities of 3D game design would have been welcome. As it stands, *MDK* may not be a work of art for the



ages, but it is a polished, exceptional effort that easily outclasses

most of the competition in its genre — be they PC or console games.

• ROGER BURCHILL



3-5 While there are some areas of *MDK* that suffer from draw-in, the gamer just won't notice these, as the heat of combat and the thrill of exploring the huge game environments take precedent over minor graphic details.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	9
MUSIC	9
SOUND EFFECTS	8

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	9
BALANCE	10
DEPTH	10

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	8
PRESENTATION	9
INNOVATION	8

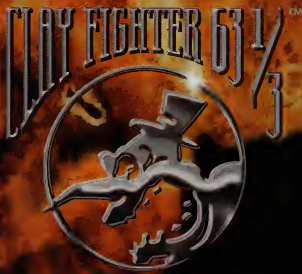
RATING

ALTERNATIVES
Die Hard Trilogy 8.5
Resident Evil 9.2
Tomb Raider 9.5
Shadows Of The Empire 6.7

9.2



They have been born of fire —
hopefully they won't melt.



Developed and published by

Interplay
BY GAMERS, FOR GAMERS.

www.interplay.com



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プレイステーション



REVIEW
PLAYSTATION

RALLY CROSS

Finally, an off-road racer that really takes off!

Iknown mostly for sports titles such as *Gameday '97*, Sony Interactive Studios has separated itself from the pack in the already overcrowded market of off-road racers with one of the best-looking and playing racing games available on the PlayStation.

The graphics in *Rally Cross* are quite simply unbeatable. There isn't another racing game available that looks any better. Whether it's the contoured terrain, the smooth polygonal models, or even special effects like

dust, mud, and water; *Rally Cross* is a sight to behold. Draw-in, the 32-bit racing course, is almost non-existent, as the hills and valleys tend to hide the distant horizon.

All six of the course types have distinctly different terrain that looks and handles in its own unique way. Whether it's sand, mud, ice, snow, or paved road, the wide-variety (16 in all) of cars handle differently on each surface.

Each of the six courses also have three different versions, which feature track add-ons and short-cuts. You can also race any of the tracks backwards, which raises the total of different race courses to a whopping 36! But the key feature that raises *Rally Cross* above the crowd is an awesome split-screen race, as well as a four-player showdown. The frame-rate decreases for the split and quad screens, but the fast-paced racing and violent crashes make for perfect head-to-head competition. There's even a mode where you actually race the opposite direction of your oppo-

nent, which ultimately leads to some amazing head-on collisions.

The only problem with *Rally Cross* is the control. The cars all have a real heavy feeling as you make turns, but one little bump and the cars are suddenly light and flying all over the course. In the multi-player game, this is fine, but trying to get through the computer opponents is near impossible on the harder levels. The

computer doesn't flip over on the harder levels, meaning you are the only one left with the chore of flipping back on your wheels.

Despite its minor flaws, *Rally Cross* is still one of the best PlayStation games so far this year. It certainly has enough depth to keep you playing all the way into '98.

• MIKE SALMON



1 The true 3D terrain takes a while to get used to, but allows for tons of strategy and a tough race. 2 The crashes are amazing as the cars flip over each other! Once on the ground, you have to rock the car back on its wheels. 3-4 The variety in tracks is great for looks, but more importantly, each terrain handles differently as well. 5 Two or four player races on one screen are an absolute blast, despite some slight problems with the frame-rate.

ALTERNATIVES

Sega Rally 7.8

Rage Racer 7.9

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	10
MUSIC	8
SOUND EFFECTS	7

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	6
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	9

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	10
PRESENTATION	9
INNOVATION	8

RATING

8.1

REVIEW PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション



MEGA MAN 8

Will the real Mega Man please step forward?

By giving players *Mega Man 8* (the original Mega Man, not that 'X' character), Capcom couldn't have chosen a better present to celebrate the little guy's tenth birthday. This may look like another boring 2D platformer, but by taking advantage of the PlayStation's color palette, sound chip, and FMV compression, Capcom has not only made *Mega Man 8* one of the best 2D platformers ever, but also a full blown multimedia experience.

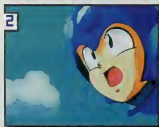
Starting off with the most elaborate animated cut-scenes ever seen

in a videogame, *Mega Man 8*'s opening gets the player charged up for some serious platforming action. Like its predecessors, *MM8* has an excellent learning curve. By starting out with simplistic level designs, the player is given the opportunity to adapt to Mega Man's moves and weapon systems. As the game wears on, the bosses and stages get increasingly tougher, but without ever getting to the point to where the game gets overly frustrating. The last few stages are guaranteed to keep even the most seasoned of veteran

game players on their toes. Despite being predominantly a straight-forward platformer, Capcom has thrown in a few surprises like shooting levels, where Mega Man flies around, destroying enemies and grabbing power ups, reminiscent of those found in Konami's *Gradius* series. Whenever our hero finds himself in a bind or running low on energy, he can always turn to his robotic dog, Rush, for help. Even Mega Man's sister, known as Roll, and the devastating Proto Man pop in from time to time to give advice or lend a hand.

If there is one fault that *Mega Man 8* has, it's the music department. The soundtrack sounds too much like *Ridge Racer*'s generic rave music and doesn't mix in well with the gameplay. But, if this kind of music is your thing, then by all means, crank it up.

In the end, it's not just the gameplay and pretty graphics that make *MM8* a fun gaming experience, it's the whole presentation. Everything, from characters from Mega Man's past making cameo appearances, to the great voice samples to the beautiful FMV, make *MM8* not only the best of the series, but



1 Mega Man now has the ability to swim! 2 The real Mega Man is finally back and he's never looked better.

also the best 2D platformer on a next-generation system since *Guardian Heroes*.

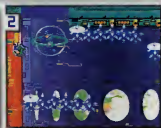
• JASON MONTES

ALTERNATIVES

Crash Bandicoot 6.6
Pendulum 6.1
Sonic 3D Blast 7.0



All of the bosses in *Mega Man 8* have their strengths and weaknesses.



1 This screen lets the player choose from the game's different stages. 2 Now challenges, like navigating this bubble through spikes, await our hero. 3 Timing and wits — something all *Mega Man* fans should know about — are an integral part of the game's strategy. 4 *Mega Man 8*'s cut-scenes sport the best animation seen in a videogame since the likes of *Guardian Heroes*.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS 8
MUSIC 5
SOUND EFFECTS 8

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION 9
BALANCE 9
DEPTH 8

SPECIAL

EXTRAS 9
PRESENTATION 9
INNOVATION 6

RATING

8.1

プレイステーション



REVIEW
PLAYSTATION

BATTLESTATIONS

Yet another reason to say, "You sank my battleship!"

To the uneducated observer, *Battlestations* appears to be a completely original game, however, anyone who owned an

Intellivision knows exactly where the idea for this game came from. *Sea Battle* was one of the best playing action-strategy games ever made for a home console, and EA is attempting to combine that classic gameplay with a 32-bit face-lift.

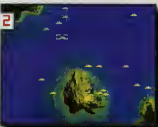
Battlestations is a game in which you deploy and maneuver a fleet of ships against an enemy (computer or human), and then encounter them in an arcade-style shoot-em-up. Against the computer, you can play in a wide variety of campaigns that have you attacking bases, stopping convoys, and rescuing hostages. The key is to use the proper ships in a strategic attack to achieve the goal.

There are eight different kinds of ships which each have their own array of weapons. The ships include the Submarine, Troop Transport, Mine Layer, Aircraft Carrier, PT Boat, Destroyer, Cruiser, and the almighty Battleship. Even though these are real ships, *Battlestations* is definitely not a sim.

Instead, it's a strategy and arcade combo that really works. The two-player game is an intense battle of wits and reflexes. It's the best way to enjoy this game. *Battlestations* doesn't have the depth of *Red Alert* or the pure arcade adrenaline of *Soviet Strike*, but is a nice mix of both.

Unfortunately, the game could have been better. The main problem is that the battles tend to get very redundant. In *Sea Battle*, confrontations required swift maneuvering and strategy, but in *Battlestations* it usually ends up being two ships right on top of each other, firing as fast as they can. That's really too bad, because if a bit more balance was put into the battles, then this could have been an awesome game. As it is, *Battlestations* is a great

The arcade-style battles feature some huge explosions and some real nice graphics.



1 Battles go to the land when you capture the enemy base by dispatching marines. 2 All of the different maps and scenarios allow for nearly endless gaming. Watch out for the mines!



The guided missiles of the Cruiser seem almost unfair and make it one of the toughest ships to defend against.



A wide variety of missions helps the one-player game, but it can't compare with the head-to-head war.

two-player game that comes very highly recommended.

• MIKE PALMON

ALTERNATIVES
Soviet Strike 7.0
Return Fire 7.0

THE LINE

• AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	7
MUSIC	7
SOUND EFFECTS	8

• GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	6
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	9

• SPECIAL

EXTRAS	8
PRESENTATION	7
INNOVATION	7

RATING

7.3

REVIEW PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション



THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN

Bringing the magic of a special movie to the PlayStation

When *The City of Lost Children* first turned up in theaters, audiences were stunned by the dazzling special effects and the fantastically weird style of the world created in the movie. So when we first heard that Psygnosis (*Wipeout XL*, *Destruction Derby II*) was going to attempt to bring that same magic to the PlayStation in the form of a graphic adventure, there was plenty of reason to be excited about the project. After all, if there is a development company that knows a little something about dazzling special effects, it's Psygnosis. Now, several months later, it's time to look at the finished product and as expected, *The City of Lost Children* is a wonder to behold.

The movie, *The City of Lost Children*, in which children are at constant risk of being kidnapped and forced into a life petty crime. The game finds you in control of a child in exactly this situa-

tion. Playing as Miette, a young French girl, you must wander through the extravagantly designed, pre-rendered (a la *Resident Evil*) city, looking for a way to right the situation in the town. To do so, in traditional graphic adventure form, you must talk to the people of the town, find hidden items and solve puzzles to unlock the mysteries of this devious plot. As you wander around the city, you'll find yourself marveling at the spectacularly beautiful sets created as pre-rendered 3D models. Though the beauty of the game is certainly something to marvel at, being able to deliver such elaborate sets does not come without a price. There are distracting bits of loading time to deal with throughout the game. Also, from time to time, the pre-rendered nature of the backgrounds gives them a rather lifeless quality, especially around the water, which simply lies flat on the screen.

The gameplay itself is both

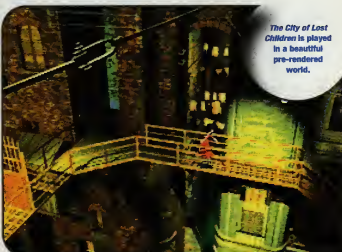


frustrating and rewarding as the puzzles are anything but easy to unlock. It takes a bit of trial and error to get through the game, so if you don't have the patience for this style of play, stay away. Also causing occasional trouble is the sometimes awkward control of a 3D character through the limited paths of the pre-rendered backgrounds. If you just can't resist the challenge of a good graphic adventure brain teaser, however, *The City of Lost Children* has a lot going for it by way of an intriguing story line and gorgeous visuals.

• PATRICK
BAGGATTA



1 people as this bizarre story unfolds. 2 With its mixing of rendered sequences, the game truly does have a cinematic quality. 3 A vast library of voice samples helps to get a real feeling for the characters. 4 Solving puzzles as you go takes a keen eye and a sharp mind. 5 The ability to change the camera angle in certain scenes is a welcome option in this style of game.



The City of Lost Children is played in a beautiful pre-rendered world.

ALTERNATIVES

Perfect Weapon 6.9

Time Commando 6.9

Circle of Blood 7.3

THE LINE

• AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	9
MUSIC	7
SOUND EFFECTS	10

• GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	9
BALANCE	6
DEPTH	8

• SPECIAL

EXTRAS	9
PRESENTATION	10
INNOVATION	7

RATING

7.8

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REVIEW SATURN



セカ サターン



LUNACY

Lunacy plays like a movie — a mixed blessing at best

Although they aren't as popular in America, FMV (full-motion video) adventure game continues to sell well in PCs and, to a lesser extent, dedicated videogame systems. Take *Myst*, for example. It's been three years since this 'interactive movie' came out on the PC, and it's still the top seller on the market. *Lunacy*, from Atlus, falls into that genre, playing well into this genre's strengths and weaknesses.

The key draw to the FMV game is the coolness factor, or the impressiveness of its virtual world. *Lunacy's* Misty Town is very cool. From the moment you wake up in this town, players will get drawn into its moody small village atmosphere. The computer-generated graphics render a world that looks like some freak noir/Twin Peaks hybrid. As a credit to the artists, the lighting and the set design turn what would otherwise be a normal town into one teetering on the precipices of Hell.

You play Fred, an amnesiac



man with a depressingly normal name and a strange brand on your forehead. Waking up in jail one night, you need to rediscover your identity, find a way to escape the town, and return to the City of Moons, a mystical paradise for Misty's poor inhabitants. Eventually, Fred must face off against Gordon, the evil lord of the town.

The plot, like most adventure games, is the best part, keeping you interested while you're visiting and revisiting the same locations in a relatively small area. Along the way, you



get to talk to the townsfolk, who indulge in amusingly opaque monologues, to which Fred reacts blankly. The voice acting is good, but the nasty lip syncing will throw you until you get used to it.

Unfortunately, this window dressing makes for a linear game. *Lunacy*, for all its mystery, leads you by the hand. At one point, you'll look at a gravestone, and Fred will realize, 'There are no flowers!' Then, go to the flower store, get a flower and put the flower on the grave. Then a guy shows up and says, 'That flower always disappears. Why don't you go to my cabin?' And so on and so on. Each character feeds you some depressingly obvious clues, which you only need to hunt through the twenty or so locations in Misty to find.

Simple gameplay aside, *Lunacy* makes a surrealistic ride — once. You finish it, and there's no incentive to replay it as a game. However, players who want to watch *Lunacy*, the 'interactive movie' again, may find it worthwhile.

• JEFF CHEN



1 This is the game's big villain. You don't see him for most of the game, but his presence hangs like a shroud over the town. 2 The name's Fred. I'm the hero. I have a lousy name. 3 There are only 20 or so locations in the entire town, so you'll be visiting this flower shop at least twice. 4 Look! It's the clock guy. That means you need a clock. The game's obvious hints ruin the ambience. 5 This feature lets you watch all the movies, organized by character.



The game is stuck permanently just before sunset, so everything has that nice dramatic lighting.

ALTERNATIVES

Cyberia 7.0
Hell 7.5
D 8.0

THE LINE

• AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	8
MUSIC	8
SOUND EFFECTS	8

• GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	6
BALANCE	6
DEPTH	5

• SPECIAL

EXTRAS	5
PRESENTATION	8
INNOVATION	6

RATING





You can almost smell
the freshly cut grass.

The hot dogs.
The pine tar.



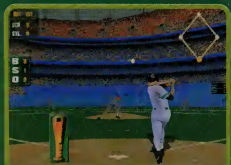
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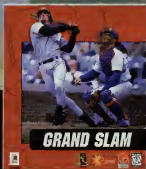
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REVIEW
NINTENDO

BLAST CORPS



Nintendo finally satisfies your appetite for destruction

After months of broken promises and game delays, Nintendo is finally delivering some great games. *Mario Kart 64* was a fine title and *Blast Corps*, perhaps surprisingly, is a pretty hot little

number. Don't let the confusing screenshots fool you, because in practice, *Blast Corps* is a simple matter of destroying everything in your path. Or more correctly, everything in the path of a runaway nuclear missile.

You play the part(s) of the elite *Blast Corps*, an international wreck and rescue outfit, with the most advanced destructive machinery on Earth. The previously mentioned missile is loaded on a truck and out of control — you have to clear a safe route for the truck until it runs out of steam. Sounds simple, but since every vehicle at your disposal has different abilities and, since every obstacle has different properties, it all gets very confusing very quickly.

Much as the action in the game is intense, with trucks and robots blowing up some pretty large objects. It is the puzzle element that finally lifts this to a better level. Blowing up the world is only half the battle. Typically, you'll have to switch vehicles a number of times on a level, using a robot to destroy a building and then a train to move an obstacle out of the way.

1 This is the unfortunate result of letting the missile truck collide with an object. Total devastation. 2 We like this truck. It's hard to control, but satisfying once mastered. 3 The truck's path is predictable enough — it always travels in a straight line — but judging the toughness of an obstacle (like these towers) can be tricky. 4 The train looks pretty, but it's practical too. You can actually get in and drive it — a skill you'll need to complete the game.



The robots look and feel unlike any other vehicles in the game and the change in physics can be disorienting at first.

Strategy is just as important as reflex.

These complicated puzzle levels are broken up by more simplistic, but equally enjoyable race levels, which are in turn broken up by various bonus levels, including a 3D *Pac-Man* style maze, complete with ghost-like enemy trucks. It's this enormous depth which makes *Blast Corps*, if nothing else, a great value for the money. As you complete a level, more of the 'world' is opened up to be completed, practiced or simply explored. A linear structure will lead you to the game's conclusion, but you can take your time and simply screw around and blowing stuff up, if you're feeling lazy.

This is a return to form for the developer Rare who, for the last few

Go ahead and pass that missile truck! You've got Insurance, right?



years, has been churning out graphical masterpieces like *Donkey Kong Country* or *Killer Instinct*, but without the charm or originality of its early games.

If you're a Nintendo 64 owner, then you're drastically short of games, and *Blast Corps* is a breath of fresh air, or a big cloud of acid dust and smoke — just depends on how you look at it.

• FRANK O'CONNOR

ALTERNATIVES

Super Mario 64 10
WaveRace 64 9.5
Mario Kart 64 8.1

THE LINE

• AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	7
MUSIC	6
SOUND EFFECTS	7

• GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	8
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	8

• SPECIAL

EXTRAS	9
PRESENTATION	8
INNOVATION	9

RATING



SCUD

- GENRE: SHOOTER
- PLAYERS: 1 or 2
- PUBLISHER: SEGA/ST
- DEVELOPER: SEGA/ST
- RATING: T
- M.S.R.P.: \$44.99

Based on the popular underground comic book series, *Scud: The Disposable Assassin* offers a unique combination of gameplay. Through the use of

Stunner light guns

or standard control pads (or a combination of both), one or two players can play a side-scrolling action game or a first-person shooter. While this variety of gameplay is intriguing, the problem with *Scud* is that neither of the genres is very well represented. The gameplay is also marred by the insane pace and unbalanced gameplay.



1 Use of the standard Saturn controller introduces the player to the thrilling world of... the 2D side-scroller! 2 The use of a light gun improves things only marginally, thanks to the unbalanced gameplay.

game that frequently verges on unfair. The game's ultimate highlight are the cut-scenes that exhibit a personality that the game itself lacks.

● ROGER BURCHILL

RATING

AUDIO/VIDEO

GRAPHICS	7
MUSIC	7
SOUND FX	7

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	6
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	6

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	5
PRESENTATION	9
INNOVATION	4

5.9

Wing Commander IV

- GENRE: SHOOTER
- PLAYERS: 1
- PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
- DEVELOPER: ORIGIN
- RATING: T
- M.S.R.P.: \$59.99

Taking place years after the final Conflict with the Kilrathi, *WC4* comes into play with a Confederation Civil War looming overhead. The player once again takes the role of the veteran ace pilot Blair, played by Mark Hamill of *Star Wars* fame.

Over the course of the game, the player makes key decisions which have a profound effect on the ending of the story. The game's graphics are lacking when compared to the standards of the day, but the gameplay is straight forward. *WC4* suffers from the lack of a keyboard peripheral, relying on button combinations for shortcuts. Despite this predicament, fans of the

Get a lock on the Kilrathi with *Wing Commander IV*



series won't be disappointed.

● JASON MONTES

RATING

AUDIO/VIDEO

GRAPHICS	5
MUSIC	8
SOUND FX	9

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	6
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	8

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	5
PRESENTATION	9
INNOVATION	4

6.0

POD

- GENRE: RACING
- PLAYERS: 1 to 8
- PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT
- DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT
- RATING: KA
- M.S.R.P.: \$59.95

Providing the most immersive racing experience possible, *POD* takes advantage of Intel's new MMX CPU technology, which allows for higher frame-rates and a greater sense of speed. Features include sixteen regular tracks, several hidden bonus tracks, and three levels of difficulty. Various multi-player options are also provided. *POD* is a

POD offers PC gamers a chance to live life in the fast lane!

very solid contender. The excellent computer AI will give gamers their money's worth.

● STEPHEN FROST



REQUIREMENTS

- IBM PC
- Pentium 240 or Higher
- MMX Compatible Machine
- SVGA
- 32MB RAM
- 4X CD-ROM Drive

RATING

AUDIO/VIDEO

GRAPHICS	9
MUSIC	8
SOUND FX	8

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	8
BALANCE	8
DEPTH	8

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	8
PRESENTATION	8
INNOVATION	8

8.2

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DESCENT MAXIMUM

- GENRE: SHOOTER
- PLAYERS: 1 to 2
- PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY
- DEVELOPER: PARALLAX SOFTWARE
- RATING: T
- M.S.R.P.: \$59.95

A If the disorienting gameplay that made the *Descent* series a PC favorite has made it over once again in the second *Descent* game for the PlayStation. Featuring new levels, *Descent Maximum's* most noticeable improvement is in its better control. Improved

graphics, with more attractive texture maps, and the series' signature light-sourcing, move the graphics more in line with home console standards. The game's main drawback is that its gameplay is beginning to feel overly familiar and dated. The added two player option via the link cable is nice, but *Descent Maximum* suffers from being just

1 There's a slight improvement in graphics and control, but there's no mistaking that *Descent Maximum* is a *Descent* game.
2 The use of the same old over-level cut some over and over again becomes a little grating.

another *Doom*-clone whose novelty has sadly worn thin.

● ROGER BURCHILL

RATING

AUDIO/VIDEO

GRAPHICS	7
MUSIC	7
SOUND FX	7

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	8
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	7

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	6
PRESENTATION	6
INNOVATION	5

7.0

MAGIC: THE GATHERING BATTLEMAGE

A cclaim's first entry into the real time strategy genre comes as a huge disappointment, especially when one considers the measures it took to secure the rights for the *Magic: The Gathering* license

(Acclaim had a big lawsuit with Micropose). *BattleMage*, simply put, is tiresome and undeniably frustrating. Too often, the AI relentlessly assaults the player, giving him or her no time to formulate a workable strategy. This game may have been better if given a turn-based engine rather than a gimmicky real-time engine. By jumping on the real-time gaming bandwagon, Acclaim has failed to make a satisfactory product. Even hardcore *MTG* fans should stay away from this poor effort.

● JASON MONTES

MTG doesn't offer anything new or exciting in the way of graphics or gameplay.



AUDIO/VIDEO

GRAPHICS	4
MUSIC	6
SOUND FX	7

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	4
BALANCE	3
DEPTH	6

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	6
PRESENTATION	7
INNOVATION	3

RATING

5.0

THUNDER TRUCK RALLY

U hat does *Thunder Truck Rally* offer? How about circuit racing on three lap courses, endurance racing to checkpoints across open landscapes, and novelty (read repetitive) car-crushing. In

the race modes, players race from one of four viewpoints against eight CPU drivers, and must not only beat the pack, but finish without wrecking. The damage element adds strategy, and the trucks take a major beating when airing it out over some pretty high cliffs. With solid graphics, music, and control, it's the gameplay that doesn't feel like it's completely tuned. The game never imparts a thrilling sense of speed or competition, and the CPU cars at times seem devoid of AI, but most off-road fans will find something here to like.

● TOM FISSO

With no split-screen action, up to nine players can compete, but only one at a time.



AUDIO/VIDEO

GRAPHICS	8
MUSIC	9
SOUND FX	8

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	7
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	8

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	7
PRESENTATION	9
INNOVATION	8

RATING

7.7

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STRATEGIES:
D. Fighting Vipers
NFL Gameday

The best sports videogame coverage anywhere,
from gamers who actually play real sports

SPORTSLINE

Uhat a month in sports! After taking several trips to see some of the hottest new games in development, I can say that 1997 is starting to really shape up. Surprising Acclaim looks like they are ready to start challenging Sony and EA in the battle for sports supremacy. Take a look at *NHL Breakaway '98* and *Quarterback Club '98* for proof that Acclaim finally has some good product. Don't miss the exclusive report on *NHL*

Powerplay '98. The first polygonal hockey game is back and is looking and playing better than ever. Plus, I've got reviews on *NBA Shoot Out '97*, *VR Baseball '97*, and *Goal Storm '97*. Oh hell, just read through all seven pages of sports goodness and let me know what you think.

In the coming months, I will continue to follow the development of all the sports games, and expect a whole bunch more once I head to E3 in June. I will see the new *Madden*, *NHL*,

Face Off, *Pennant Race*, and a few surprises at E3, as well. Until next month, enjoy the best time of the year in sports! Whether it's the NBA playoffs, NHL playoffs, Baseball opening day, or even the NCAA tournament, there's plenty for sports fans to enjoy.

• Mike Salmon

Mike_Salmon@qm.imagine-inc.com

EXCLUSIVE!

PREVIEW PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション



NHL POWERPLAY '98

Exclusive look at the sequel to
1996's best hockey game

On a recent trip to Irvine, California, I got the opportunity to sit down at an Anaheim Ducks game with the producer of *NHL Powerplay '98*, Aaron Drayer, and find out exactly what they can do for an encore.

Last year, Radical and Virgin surprised everyone by making the best playing hockey game on the planet. Now, with another year of work behind them, *Powerplay '98* is looking even better. Some of the only complaints about last year's game was the lack of stat-tracking, and right and left-handed players. Those two problems have already been fixed, but the developers didn't stop there. Instead, they are working on completely upgrading every aspect of the game.

The first thing you notice is the graphics and, while last year's game had incredibly detailed players, this year they are even better. Bauer has been signed on as a partner and therefore has their name all over the game. The player's pants, sticks, gloves, and helmets all come with an official Bauer logo. This just adds an even more realistic look to the game. Besides that, all of the player textures have added shading, so that the players look even better.

Some of the strongest points in *Powerplay* were the amazing animations, but the developers wanted more. So they added tons more animations to the already smooth ones from last year.

Motions added include dropping to the knees to block a shot, stacking the pads, getting whacked in the head by the puck, a fake shot, hooking, and a whole new batch of checking animations. These new moves aren't just for looks, either. Each of them changes the way the game is played. Fake shots can bring defenders to their knees, making it easier to skate by for the goal. The new hook maneuver allows you to tie up a player from behind, but press too hard and you'll get a penalty.

Another strong point in *Powerplay* was the sharp AI, but once again, the developers wanted more. This time, the goalies will watch the puck go around the ice and, when the situation is right, they will come out of the net to cut down the angle, or even dig a puck out of the corner on a power play. Some other key additions have been added to the checking. Now, when your player is knocked into a stumble, you can attempt to pass the puck, although the accuracy isn't good. Other new features include create player, trading, fighting, and an all-star game compiled from user stats.

All this, and *Powerplay '98* is still running at over 30fps on the PlayStation. As soon as I get more information on this game, I will pass it on for the one-timer.

Motion Commotion

How many times have you seen the pictures of motion-captured superstars doing their part for a video game? The answer is a lot, but Radical Entertainment takes a different approach to the whole thing.



1-2 Zooming in close on the replays, you can really see the details, like jerseys tucked into Bauer pants and players' names on the jerseys.

Watch out EA, Powerplay '98 is on its way

All through last year, PC players got the raw end of the deal. While the consoles had the beautiful 3D *Powerplay*, the PC version was still sprites. This year, that is all changing, as Virgin takes aim at unseating EA from atop the PC hockey world.



The game will be the exact same game as the PlayStation, but because it fully supports 3D cards and MMX, the PC version should look even better. What's even more amazing is that no matter what size your computer

is, *Powerplay '98* has a game for you. If you're running on a p100 or higher, then the 3D goodness is yours, but for those with slower machines, a special 2D version of the game is available to play as well. When asked how *Powerplay '98* could compete with *NHL* on the PC, Drayer had this to say, 'Our AI was better last year and will be again this year. The players react and play with real NHL strategy. And now, with the graphics enhancements, we will look just as good or better'.

The PC version is scheduled for a simultaneous release and will include LAN and modem-to-modem multi-player features.



The front end on both versions has been smoothed up to give it the look.



1-2 The PC version supports all 3D cards and MMX for a super-sharp, high-res, 3D experience.

3-4 The looks of *Powerplay '98* are now equal to EA's *NHL '97*, but the key difference is the improved AI.

Instead of bringing in a prima donna superstar for a couple hours, they opted to hire minor league hockey players for the motion-capture. Why? Because they are willing to do things that the superstars wouldn't do themselves. Therefore, you'll see plenty of great animations of players getting pounded and falling flat on their face. In order to get the most accurate motion-data, the developers did the motion-capture on ice with pads on. Instead of using the traditional reflective balls, Radical went with a different method of motion-capture using cords.



These graphics aren't final, but you can already see that they are top of the line. Just wait until this one is finished.

According to producer Aaron Drayer, 'It's a much more effective way of capturing motion, especially on ice'. To the gamer, it doesn't really matter who or how the motions are captured as long as the game looks great. This game does.



1-2 The incredible animation allows for some great checks and falls. 3-4 The camera angle for the game is off the ice a bit, so you can set up different plays. This year, there are four different cameras to choose from.



1-2 The developers attached motion-sensors to minor league players and had them do a variety of moves, including taking big hits.

Then they take the data and apply it to the basic polygon figures. Finally, the uniform texture is added.

PREVIEW PLAYSTATION, PC



プレイステーション
コンピューターゲーム



NHL BREAKAWAY '98

Acclaim is out to show that Powerplay isn't the only game in town

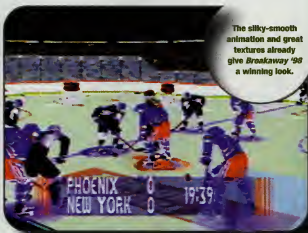


1-2 Powerful slap shots and sprawling saves are the key to any hockey game. 3-4 All the licenses ensure that *NHL Breakaway '98* has a chance to compete with the rest.

While I was at the NBA All-Star game, Acclaim showcased its latest line-up of sports titles. What they showed shocked all in attendance as they unveiled *NHL Breakaway '98*. Acclaim's first venture into the coolest game on earth is being developed by Sculptured Software and is already among the best looking PlayStation games around.

The game has the NHL and NHLPA licenses to insure that all the real players and teams will be in the game, but what's more important is that there is going to be a ton of real hockey as well. The early version I played didn't have the AI in place, but it did showcase the amazing graphics and animation. The nearly unlimited check animations feature hits from every side of the body, slamming into the boards, and even shattering the glass. The players all have the real uniforms texture-mapped on their smooth polygon figures, complete with the team logo, player name, and number. They don't just look good in still screens! The best part of *NHL Breakaway '98* is the smooth animation. Everything from slap-shots to power-stops is done with incredible detail.

What's even more promising for *Breakaway '98* are the promised advances in gameplay. The people making this game are hockey fanatics and are planning on including



The silky-smooth animation and great textures already give *Breakaway '98* a winning look.

more strategy and season management features than ever before. You'll be able to use points for drafting and training rookies, or you may have to use your points to help heal an injured super star. It's these type of season features that have been sorely missed in a hockey game. The developers are also planning in-depth strategy for every facet of the game. Their goal is to take the game of hockey to an entirely new level and, from what I've seen, they could just pull it off.

1-2 The player AI wasn't in place, but the developers want to create a realism that other games can't touch.



THE LINE



1-4 The developers are planning on taking *Powerplay*'s ground-breaking features to the next level by allowing for an infinite number of possibilities on checks.

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VR BASEBALL TIP

9

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SQUEEZE THE RUNNER HOME WITH
SIMULTANEOUS BATTER AND
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 Instant access to pitch selection, speed and control for unlimited plate locations without menus. Total bat control for power, contact, bunt and pull-hitting without tipping your hand to your opponent.

 Super-fast Season Play mode with top 10 or full stats. Plus, mid-season All-Star voting and game.

Plus, a true physics model controls velocity, rotation, gravity and air friction for true flight, bounce and roll for varying surfaces like AstroTurf, grass, dirt and fences.

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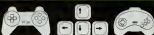
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COMING SOON!!!

PREVIEW

PLAYSTATION, PC, SATURN


 プレイステーション
 コンピューターゲー
 セガ サターン

QUARTERBACK CLUB '98

Are you ready for some football? It seems like only a few weeks ago that the Pack was bringing the Lombardi Trophy home to Green Bay, but football is on its way back again. The 'new' Acclaim is ready to bring back an update to one of last year's surprisingly good football games.

The developers at Iguana are ready to take

QBC '98 to the next level with improved graphics, play, and features. The knocks on last year's game were speed, graphics, and presentation. This time, the developers hope to fix all the problems. The player graphics have been cleaned up and new features like trades and free agents have been added, along with some additional speed. What will be returning is the amazing tackling of

QBC '97, except it is going to be even better. Now, the force of the tackle will impact whether the ball carrier is slammed backwards. Therefore, a big hit will look and feel even more powerful.

If Iguana can fix up last year's game and add some more features, then *QBC '98* could be ready to give EA and Sony a run for the title.



1 The pixelly graphics of *QBC '97* have been replaced with smoother players and a brighter color palette.

2 The hard-hitting tackles are back, but this time they are even better.

3 Nothing gets the sporting juices going like some good old fashioned football. Bring it on!

PREVIEW

PLAYSTATION, PC


 プレイステーション
 コンピューターゲーム

TRIPLE PLAY '98

Yet another classic EA series has gone 3D as *Triple Play '98* comes to the plate loaded with polygons. I had a chance to play an early alpha of *TP '98* and talk to the producer about this year's product.

The most obvious change is the graphics, which feature some of the best-looking players I've seen. However, the developers were quick to

point out that the gameplay is not going to be forgotten. Instead, *TP '98* features more control than ever before. The player now has to hold the pitch button down to an optimum point for best results, a feature that gives the player much more control of the game.

The version I played was far too early to make any judgements, but it did serve as a way to

showcase some of the amazing new audio and video in the game. For the first time ever, the announcer, Jim Hughson, will be joined by color man Buck Martinez, who throws an amazing variety of one-liners. However, all the fancy play-by-play and graphics won't mean a thing if the game doesn't play. I'll let you know about that next issue.



1 The polygonal players are beefy and the few uniforms that were done look great.

2 The redone stadiums have the same polished look of last year's game.

3 The slick EA look is already in place. Now if the gameplay can finally catch up.

REVIEW

PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション

GOAL STORM '97

The game that FIFA should have been

One of the first sports titles out for the PlayStation was Konami's *Goal Storm*. Its



1-3 Utilizing plays like the give and go is crucial in moving the ball into the box. Just long-balling it won't work in this game.

slick graphics and fast play were great, but the lack in depth and in realism really hurt the title. *Goal Storm '97* has aggressively tackled these problems and the result is the most realistic soccer game I have ever played.

It doesn't look as good or control as smooth as Sega's celebrated *Worldwide Soccer '97*, but the soccer AI is amazing. In order to move the ball down the pitch, you must pick the receiver, perform give and gos, and lead a player through the defense. Just like in real soccer, a great team can keep possession of the ball for much of the game, then pick their spots to go into the box for a score. There are some that would say *GS '97* plays better soccer than the U.S. national team. Whether it's the perfectly executed cross or the attacking zone press, the players in *GS '97* react with incredible intelligence and realism.

There is no player's license, but if you look closely at the polygon players, you'll recognize several traits. Even the names often have a familiar ring. An example is the long red-haired U.S. defender they call Dollas (soccer fans will recognize him immediately as Alexi Lallas). And each of the countries represented is accurately rated so that World Cup simulation can begin.

Soccer purists will appreciate



the pace and strategy involved, but to many American gamers this will seem a frustrating task. Scores of games in *GS '97* are usually in the 1-0 range and that lack of scoring is exactly what has kept Soccer from being a popular professional sport in the states. Therefore, if you are looking for the most enjoyable soccer game, then I would suggest *WWS '97*. However, if you want realism, then *GS '97* cannot be matched.

The animation of the players is extremely smooth, as they can pull off moves like feints, back-heels, scissor kicks, headers, slide tackles,

and diving headers. Up close, the graphics look amazing, but you are forced to play with a far away camera due to the nature of the game. Still, the game looks plenty good and it plays like nothing else out there. One of my only real complaints with *GS '97* are the annoying sounds it makes. They sound nothing like a soccer game and shouldn't have been included. Other than that, *GS '97* is a quality game through and through.



1-2 One of the best features in this game is the through pass that allows you to lead a player through the defense. 3 Special moves like this allow players to avoid tackles and run through the middle. 4 The header is key to any soccer game. *Goal Storm '97* has done a great job of simulating this as well.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	8
MUSIC	7
SOUND EFFECTS	6

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	7
BALANCE	7
DEPTH	7

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	8
PRESENTATION	7
INNOVATION	7

RATING



REVIEW PLAYSTATION



プレイステーション

NBA SHOOT OUT '97

This year, it's got game, but is that enough?

The developers of *Shoot Out '97* have had a year to overhaul last year's disappointing effort and what they've come up with is the best basketball simulation available on any home system. I didn't say it was the best basketball game—that honor still belongs to fast paced *In The Zone 2*. However, *Shoot Out '97* is a far better simulation of basketball and a must-have for diehard hoop fanatics.

Shoot Out '97 features the most accurate player ratings ever in a basketball game. For the first time, you can actually tell the difference when you play the game. When Allen

Iverson is racing the ball down the court, there is no way that Luc Longley can keep up, just like in real life. These accurate ratings really give you a feel for each player on your roster. Playing a small and quick Mugsy Bogues is a great way to run the break, but on the defensive, he'll have trouble stopping any shot because of his size. Therefore, as the coach, you have to decide when and who to substitute.

Once the players are on the court, you can run from one of several basic offensive sets. The players' constant cutting and settling of picks is done better than in any game. Run



the offense properly and you can set up pick and rolls, alley-oops, and kick outs for three. Another key to *Shoot Out '97* is the new icon passing, which allows you to run the break with precision, throw skip passes, and generally move the ball to where you want. The old passing method is still included, but once you figure out the icon passing, you will never go back. The missing stat-tracking of last season's effort has been replaced by the best stat engine around, which keeps track of every player.

Despite all these new additions, *Shoot Out '97* still falls short. The most glaring problem is the lack of individual control. The only thing you can do is shoot a little jumper or perform one of seven dunks. There is a little fade-away, but it is poorly done. On defense, your only options are a steal or a near impossible to time shot-block. It's this lack of individuality that leaves *SO'97* feeling

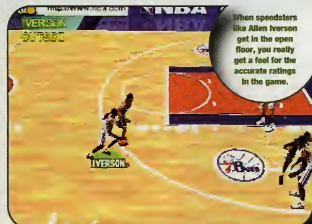
1 The jump shot, like much of this game, has no life. This is a great situation that is really missing an arcade touch.

2 The behind the back dribbles look nice, but aren't used effectively.

3 When Glen Rice catches fire, you better watch out.

almost like you're not a part of the action. Sure, you're setting up the plays, but you aren't finishing.

The amazing control and playability of *In The Zone 2* give it a life that *Shoot Out '97* never achieves. However, the detail and depth of the one-player game still make *SO'97* the best sim available.



When speedsters like Allen Iverson get in the open floor, you really get a feel for the accurate ratings in the game.

1 LEAGUE LEADERS

	PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	FG%	FT%
IVY	24.1	5.0	5.3	1.0	0.0	51.0	81.0
ROBINSON	15.1	10.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	50.0	84.0
WILKINSON	10.0	10.0	7.0	1.0	1.0	49.0	81.0
C. WATKINS	10.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	51.0	81.0
K. WILSON	10.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	49.0	81.0
G. MULLINS	10.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	49.0	81.0
A. MURPHY	10.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	49.0	81.0



3 MINNESOTA

	PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	FG%	FT%
PORTER	10.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	49.0	81.0
ROBINSON	10.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	49.0	81.0
STEVENS	10.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	49.0	81.0



1 The stat-tracking even keeps track of averages for each player. 2 The icon passing is a feature that takes getting used to, but really adds a new dimension to the game. 3 Updated rosters include rookies like Stephen Marbury. 4 There are only seven different dunks and every player can do them. Even George gets in on the tomahawk action.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS	7
MUSIC	8
SOUND EFFECTS	7

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION	7
BALANCE	9
DEPTH	8

SPECIAL

EXTRAS	7
PRESENTATION	8
INNOVATION	8

RATING

8.1



Coming in May.
[honest]



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REVIEW
PLAYSTATION

プレイステーション

VR BASEBALL '97

Interplay's bid for the title comes up a couple frames short

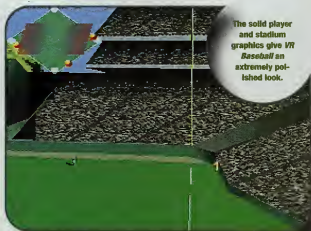
Two years after I first reported on *VR Baseball*, it is finally ready to release. The developers have spent a great deal of

time ensuring that the 3D environment in *VR Baseball* is unmatched. Every inch of every stadium has been done in amazing detail, right down to a working scoreboard.

The menu-less pitching interface is a welcome addition and the fielding control is smooth and accurate. Different players even have different bat speeds, making it much more difficult to hit with batters whose career averages tend to be near their weight. The season mode has everything, including an All-Star roster that is determined by stats you create. All the stadiums, stats, players, and options are in place to make *VR Baseball* a real contender.

So why isn't *VR Baseball* the best hardball title available? The slow frame-rate makes it so that you can't really tell if the bat hits the ball until you hear the noise. Once you get used to the timing you can figure it out, but the fact that the bat and ball never connect is a huge let down. The other problem with *VR Baseball* is one that all baseball games share, the pace. You have to wait for the batter to walk to the plate each time. Take out that walk and you'd have a faster game, which all fans would welcome.

On the positive side, *VR Baseball* features an unprecedented game clock, which allows day to turn



The solid player and stadium graphics give *VR Baseball* an extremely polished look.

to night as you're playing a game. To further enhance the games' look, the players have detailed shadows.

The physics of baseball are done to near perfection in *VR Baseball*. The size of the players and the field is extremely realistic. The flight of the pitches and hit balls is spot on. Details, like four different uniforms for each team and incredibly detailed stadiums, make this game almost complete. However, the problem with frame-rate and slowness just doesn't allow *VR Baseball*

to be as much fun as it should be.

If you can get used to the frame-rate problems, then *VR Baseball* is one of the deepest, best playing baseball games available. However, it still doesn't have the instant playability of *World Series Baseball 2*. Still, I enjoyed playing *VR Baseball* and, as of right now, it is my favorite PlayStation baseball game. We'll just wait and see if Sony, EA, Acclaim, Virgin, and others have anything to say about that.

Game Summary



1 Season stat-tracking is included, along with every other key feature. 2-3 All of the polygonal stadiums look great. The only thing missing is the smell of ballpark franks.



1-2 The swing animation is so short on frames that you never actually see the bat hit the ball. 3 The fielding is exceptional! The players even catch and throw with the proper hand. 4 All of the players' names and numbers appear on the back of each team's four different jerseys.

THE LINE

AUDIO & VIDEO

GRAPHICS **A**
MUSIC **A**
SOUND EFFECTS **A**

GAMEPLAY

INTERACTION **S**
BALANCE **A**
DEPTH **A**

SPECIAL

EXTRAS **A**
PRESENTATION **S**
INNOVATION **A**

RATING

7.4

WE NEED TO TALK...

**Only one
Web site
gives you
the whole
Sega Saturn
story.**

From the publishers of

NEXT
GENERATION

Part of the Imagine Games Network.

<http://www.saturnworld.com>



RATED

Hey, we realize that even though we have to show up for each and every issue, some of you out there don't feel the same way. We know that some

months are tough, and that you don't always have the extra cash to shell out for the latest issue of **ULTRA**. **GP**. Don't fret! These pages fill you in on all of the games you missed. Just don't worry about us, slaving away each and every month. It's OK.

When a game is *really* good, we give it our **ULTRA Award**. We don't hand these things out to just any game — it's got to get past the most grueling review system in the



biz and still come through with at least a 9.0 rating. That ain't easy! Recent **ULTRA Award** winners are shown below in a special **blue bar** with black text. *Don't miss out on these games!!!*

2XTREME	PLAYSTATION • Issue #93	5.9
AMOK	SATURN • Issue #96	6.4
AREA 51	SATURN • Issue #94	6.5
BLAST CHAMBER	PLAYSTATION • Issue #92	6.4
BUG TOO!	SATURN • Issue #94	4.5
COMMAND & CONQUER	SATURN • Issue #96	8.4
C&C: RED ALERT	PC • Issue #92	8.8
CARNAGE HEART	PLAYSTATION • Issue #95	8.6
COOENAME: TENKA	PLAYSTATION • Issue #95	8.1
CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR	PLAYSTATION • Issue #93	6.5
COOL BOARDERS	PLAYSTATION • Issue #94	7.4
CRIME WAVE	SATURN • Issue #94	6.6
CRUISIN' USA	NINTENDO 64 • Issue #93	3.1

CYBER GLADIATORS	PC CD-ROM • Issue #94	8.6
DARK SAVIOR	SATURN • Issue #94	8.0
DAYTONA USA	SATURN • Issue #93	7.4
DIABLO	PC • Issue #95	8.8
DIE HARD ARCADE	PC • Issue #96	8.2
DOOM 64	NINTENDO 64 • Issue #96	8.5
DRAGON FORCE	SATURN • Issue #94	8.5
FIGHTERS MEGAMIX	SATURN • Issue #95	9.1
G-NOME	PC • Issue #96	8.0
HEXEN	SATURN • Issue #95	7.4
INDEPENDENCE DAY	PLAYSTATION • Issue #96	5.3
JET MOTO	PLAYSTATION • Issue #93	8.4
KILLER INSTINCT GOLD	NINTENDO 64 • Issue #93	7.9
KING'S FIELD II	PLAYSTATION • Issue #93	7.3
MACHINEHEAD	SATURN • Issue #92	6.8
MARIO KART 64	NINTENDO 64 • Issue #95	8.1
MASTER OF ORION 2	PC • Issue #95	8.1

SPOTLIGHT ON:

SOUL BLADE

Be sharp and cut your opponent to the quick in this bladed brawler that some say is better than Tekken 2!



THIS MONTH'S TOP PICKS

1	MDK	PS	Rating: 7.2
2	POD	PC	Rating: 8.2
3	Rally Cross	PS	Rating: 8.1
4	Mega Man &	PS	Rating: 8.1
5	Blast Corps	64	Rating: 8.0

#1



MDK may vary
well be the
thinking
man's shoot-
'em-up!

+	MECHWARRIOR 2	PLAYSTATION • Issue #96	Rating: 7.9
+	MECHWARRIOR 2: MERCENARIES	PC • Issue #93	Rating: 8.3
+	MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY	NINTENDO 64 • Issue #92	Rating: 7.7
+	MR. BOHES	SATURN • Issue #92	Rating: 7.6
+	NAHOTEK WARRIOR	PLAYSTATION • Issue #96	Rating: 8.3
+	PAHOEMOHUIM	PLAYSTATION • Issue #92	Rating: 8.1
+	PERSONA	PLAYSTATION • Issue #94	Rating: 6.9
+	PITBALL	PLAYSTATION • Issue #92	Rating: 8.2
+	PSYCHIC FORCE	PLAYSTATION • Issue #94	Rating: 5.5
+	PUZZLE FIGHTER	PLAYSTATION • Issue #92	Rating: 9.0
+	RAGE RACER	PLAYSTATION • Issue #96	Rating: 7.9
+	REALMS OF THE HAUNTING	PLAYSTATION • Issue #96	Rating: 8.2
+	RELOADED	PLAYSTATION • Issue #94	Rating: 5.1
+	ROCKET JOCKEY	PC CD-ROM • Issue #94	Rating: 7.8
+	SCREAMERS 2	PC • Issue #92	Rating: 7.8
+	SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE	NINTENDO 64 • Issue #93	Rating: 6.7
+	SONIC 30 BLAST	SATURN • Issue #93	Rating: 7.0

SPOTLIGHT ON:

DARK SAVIOR

This action/RPG hybrid was developed by Climax, the same folks who brought you *Land Stalker*



+	SOUL BLADE	PLAYSTATION • Issue #94	Rating: 8.6
+	SPOER	PLAYSTATION • Issue #95	Rating: 6.8
+	SUIKODEN	PLAYSTATION • Issue #92	Rating: 9.1
+	TEN PIN ALLEY	PLAYSTATION • Issue #94	Rating: 7.1
+	TERMINATOR: SKYNET	PC • Issue #93	Rating: 8.9
+	TIGERSHARK	PLAYSTATION • Issue #95	Rating: 7.1
+	TOMB RAIDER	PLAYSTATION • Issue #92	Rating: 9.5
+	TOSHIKOE URA	SATURN • Issue #94	Rating: 4.7
+	TUROK: DINOSAUR HUNTER	NINTENDO 64 • Issue #96	Rating: 8.3
+	TWISTED METAL 2	PLAYSTATION • Issue #93	Rating: 8.2
+	VAHOAL HEARTS	PLAYSTATION • Issue #96	Rating: 8.0
+	VIRTUA COP 2	SATURN • Issue #93	Rating: 7.8
+	VIRTUAL ON	SATURN • Issue #93	Rating: 8.6

ULTRA GP

GAMESHOP

See anything you like? Don't worry, it's on us!

Welcome, gamer! You have just entered the **ULTRA GP GameShop**. Here you'll find many exquisite items that we've collected from all over the world, from the top gaming districts of Japan, to our own Silicon Valley. We're here to offer loyal **ULTRA Game Players** readers the chance to win loads of cool prizes each and every month. We seek out the hard to find collectibles, the stuff that the average gamer can't get his hands on. We also offer many ways to win, so that everyone has a real chance to get in on the action!

HOW TO ENTER...

It wouldn't be fair to let just anyone enter our contests. We reserve the privilege solely for real hard-core gamers, and we weed out the casual players who just want to clog up our mail bin with extra entries. So, to prove that you really deserve the cool stuff listed on the next few pages, we're going to have to put you to the test. We've racked our brains to come up with **15 videogame-related trivia questions**, ones that only serious gamers will know the answers to. Each correctly answered question will earn you one point, for a maximum of 15 points for 15 correct answers. You can spend your points anyway you like — you can divide them up between multiple contests or blow them all on one big prize. The number of points needed to enter a contest is listed next to the prize name. To enter a contest (or contests), write down the contest number(s) on a **post card**, along with the trivia answers to prove you've earned enough points (list the question number first, then the answer), and don't forget to also **answer our tie-**

breaker question, which will be used in the event of a tie.

Send the **post card** to:

ULTRA GP GameShop / May
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA 94005.

All entries must be received by June 10, 1997.

Winners will be notified by mail.

Now get to it!

PC Games (2 points/4 winners)

• Mystery PC game

Hey, we haven't forgotten you PC guys! Get your cool new PC games here, for free!



2



Mystery Games (2 points/5 winners)

• PlayStation Game
• Saturn Game

Hey, if working for the world's coolest videogame magazine has taught us anything, it's that only suckers pay for their games. Don't be a chump! Get your new games from us, and we won't charge you a penny. There's only one catch, though — we only have so many to go around! Enter today!

?

CONTEST QUESTIONS

1. ReLanded has a hidden character — do you know who he is?
2. Who is the last boss in *King of Fighters '96*?
3. Which new *Star Wars* Trilogy scene was added in the Special Edition? (A) The infamous Chewbacca Shower Scene (B) We get to see the empire's home world of Coruscant (C) Lilo become-wizards and a new C6 tongue to every Luke and Leia kiss (D) All the Ewoks spontaneously explode just before the end credits of *Jedi*.
4. In *Tekken 3*, who are Jin's parents?
5. True or false: there are Chocobos in *Tomb 2*, and they peck you to death.
6. What is the name of one of your AI support in *Jumping Flash 2*?
7. How many colors does the GameBoy Pocket come in?
8. What famous 'Raiders' artifact does Lara Croft keep by her front door?
9. Name of at least one videogame character who has been seen smoking cigarettes.
10. What famous Japanese pop singer has her own Saturn videogame? (Hint: Check recent issues of *UGP*)
11. What 'increases your reaction time' in *Wipout XL 2*? (A) Gatorade (B) Jaegermeister (C) Red Bull (D) Colored chalk
12. True or false: Chris wears a purple cape sometimes, when he's feeling a little extra 'spunky'.
13. How many different vehicles can you choose from in *Blast Corps*?
14. How many female characters total have appeared in the *Street Fighter* series from the first game on?
15. How many 'bits' was the Sega Master System?

TIE-BREAKER



So, mister high and mighty 'Chris Sute' thinks that he can just up and leave us, huh? That bum can't even tie his shoelaces, or chew his own food! We're placing bets here at **ULTRA GP** as to how long he'll actually last without our help. What do you think? We want to hear your predictions.

3

Prima Strategy Pack (4 points/4 winners)

• Package of six Prima Strategy Books



Having trouble beating your games? Hey, we don't blame you — videogames keep getting tougher and tougher these days. Of course, we would never need any help, but for you mere mortals, a little expert advice now and then can be a very good thing.

4

Anime Video Set (6 points/3 winners)

• Super-cool Japanese anime movies



If you like videogames, chances are you like anime. Most games have that same Japanese-cartoon style, and many of them are based directly on anime films and characters. Hey, videogames ain't everything, you know — you've still got to find something else to do for the other two or so hours of the day!

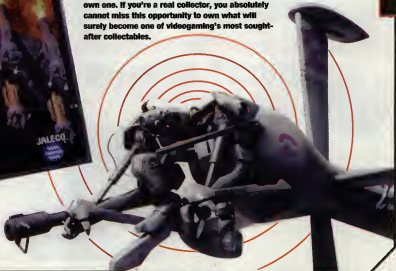
5

Brahma Force Special (8 points/3 winners)

- Brahma Force videogame
- Brahma Force limited-edition model kit



Our special this month is a *Brahma Force* game + model kit package and, let me tell you, this is quite a special package, indeed. These model kits are so incredibly rare, that you'd be lucky just to ever hear about one, much less see it, or even own one. If you're a real collector, you absolutely cannot miss this opportunity to own what will surely become one of videogaming's most sought-after collectables.



Your #1 source for Codes, Strategies, and Tactics!

ALL ACCESS

The weeks drag by and still no sign of a replacement. We wouldn't want to say that Roger is taking this hard, but it gets a bit scary when he only comes out from under his desk to

forage for food or play an occasional game of *World Wide Soccer*. We even brought back the Code Monkey to appease him a bit, but all Roger did was steal all the bananas in the office and try to groom Chris. We'll

let you know if old Frog improves, but in the meantime, send your codes (and any spare bananas) to: Roger@urchin.com, imagine-inc.com

NBA: In The Zone 2

KONAMI • PLAYSTATION

All-Star Teams

1-2 At the Title Screen with the cursor on 'Start', press and hold L1+R2+SELECT+START until the next screen comes on. The All-Star Teams will now be selectable when playing in Exhibition Mode.



RE-LOADED

INTERPLAY • PLAYSTATION

Armed and Loaded

1 Extra Ammo - For extra ammunition, pause the game and hold L1+L2 for ten seconds. With these buttons held, press Triangle, Left, Left, Left, Circle, Triangle, Down. From here on, refill ammo by pausing the game and selecting the Ammo option that has appeared on the Pause menu.

Healing - To heal yourself, pause the game and hold L1+L2 for ten seconds. With these buttons held, press Down, Right, Left, Triangle, Right, Down. Now heal yourself by pausing the game and selecting the Health option that has appeared on the Pause menu.

Level Skip - Pause the game and hold L1+L2 for ten seconds. With these buttons held, press Left, Triangle, X, Right, Circle, Triangle, Down. Now skip levels by pausing the game and selecting the Skip option that has appeared on the Pause menu.

Weapon Power-Up - Pause the game and hold L1+L2 for ten seconds. With these buttons held, press Left, Up, X, Circle. Power up weapons by pausing the game and selecting the Power option that has appeared on the Pause menu.

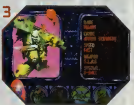
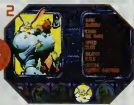


SOVIET STAIKE

ELECTRONIC ARTS • PLAYSTATION

Infinite Elvis

In the password screen, enter the password 'ELVISLIVES' in order to receive an infinite number of attack helicopters. When playing a saved game, load it and then enter the password.



2-3 Play as Fwank - Highlight Mamma and press L1, Circle, R1, Down, Down, R1, Circle, L1, L1. A red balloon will appear over Sister Magpie. Move the cursor there and Fwank will be playable.

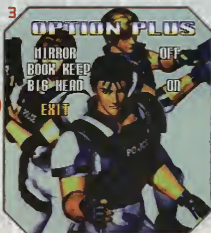


VIRTUR COP 2

SEGA • SATURN

Instant Options

1-4 To access all the game options without completing the game, plug a control pad into the player-one port and input Up, Down, Up, Down, A, X, B, Y, C, Z at the Title Screen. Replace the control pad with the Stunner (Gun) and all options including big head mode, free play, and gun select will be available for use.



CRUSDR: No Remorse

ORIGIN • SATURN

Level Passwords

1-2 Below is a complete set of pass words for the 'Mamma's Boy' setting.

Level	Password
Two	FWQP
Three	PLRQ
Four	SZNF
Five	TDES
Six	JIBT
Seven	KZCV
Eight	N3DW
Nine	MAFX
Ten	XSGZ
Eleven	C6HO
Twelve	D7J1
Thirteen	F8K2
Fourteen	FGL3
Fifteen	JFM4

Enter the password 'LRTN' to roam the game developers' offices





BLOOD OMEN: Legacy of Kain

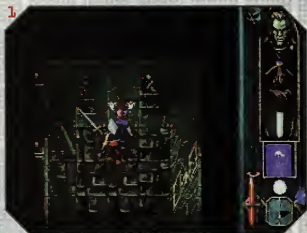
ELECTRONIC ARTS • PLAYSTATION

Kain Kodes

1 Blood Refill - While playing, press Up, Right, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Right, Left to refill the blood vial.

Full Magic - To fill the magic meter, press Right, Right, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Right, Left while playing.

2-3 View all Videos - To view all the video clips, press Left, Right, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Right, Left while playing, then press SELECT and view the Dark Diary.



DISRUPTOR

UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE • PLAYSTATION

Level Passwords

Level

Passwords

Chemical Factory ...	Square, Circle, X, Circle, Triangle, Triangle, X, Circle, Square, X, Square
Rooftops	X, Triangle, Square, Circle, Square, X, Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle
Jupiter Station	Triangle, X, Triangle, Square, Circle, Circle, X, Circle, X, Triangle, Square, Square
Triton	X, Circle, Triangle, Circle, Square, Triangle, X, X, Square, Circle, Circle, Triangle
Mars	Circle, X, Circle, Triangle, X, X, Square, Circle, Circle, X, Triangle, X
Antarctica	Square, Circle, X, Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Square, Triangle, X, Triangle, Square, Triangle
MO	Circle, Square, Circle, X, Triangle, Triangle, X, Circle, X, Triangle, X, X
Reactor	Square, X, Circle, Circle, Triangle, X, X, Square, Circle, Triangle, Circle, Circle
Orbiting Habitat	Square, Circle, X, X, Square, X, Triangle, Circle, Square, Circle, Triangle, Square
Dream	Triangle, Triangle, X, X, Circle, Circle, Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Square, Square, Circle
Prison	Circle, Square, Triangle, Circle, X, Circle, Square, Triangle, X, X, Circle, Square
Fortress	Triangle, Triangle, X, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Circle, X, Circle, Square, X, Circle





SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II TURBO

CAPCOM • PLAYSTATION

Hidden Character Codes



1-2 Play as Akuma - To play as Akuma, highlight Morrigan and while holding down SELECT press Down, Down, Down, Left, Left, Left, Circle.

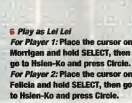
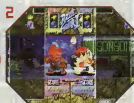
3 Play as Dan - To play as Dan, highlight Morrigan and while holding down SELECT press Left, Left, Left, Down, Down, Down, Circle.

4 Play as Devilot - To play as Devilot, perform the code for Dan but do not hit the Circle button until the countdown timer shows 10.

5 Play as Amanda

For Player 1: Place the cursor on Morrigan and hold SELECT, then go to Donovan and press Circle.

For Player 2: Place the cursor on Felicia and hold SELECT, then go to Donovan and press Circle.



Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo features 'little kid' versions of Street Fighter and Darkstalkers characters.



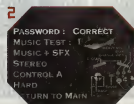
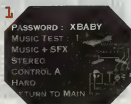
AMOK

SEGA • SATURN

Invulnerability



1-3 On the Options screen, enter the password 'XBABY' and press X to enter the code. Start a game and you will notice that your energy will decrease, but you will not die.





ANDRETTI RACING

ELECTRONIC ARTS • PLAYSTATION, SATURN

Bonus Cars

1-5 Start a new race and select the 'Begin Career' option. At the 'Register' screen, enter 'Go Bears' for an additional array of Stock cars, or 'Go Bruins' for more Indy Cars.



QUAKE

ID SOFTWARE • PC

Cheat Codes

To activate the codes listed, press the ESC key and go to Options to enter the Quake Console. Once the console appears, type in the code and press return. To leave the console and resume playing press ESC again.

- COLORxx** change clothing (xx is number 1 to 13)
- FLY** toggles flying mode on/off
- GOD** toggles GOD mode on/off
- IMPULSE 9** All weapons, all keys
- IMPULSE 255** turns on quad damage
- KILL** suicide
- MAP EPM#** Level Warp
- NAME** changes player name
- NOCLIP** toggles clipping on/off



CODE MONKEY

CODES & MONKEY PRIZES...

He's back...

That's right, code fans! Code Monkey is back and he's back with an ULTRA-style vengeance. Long time readers are familiar with the distinguished award (for the best reader submitted code of the month) from the golden age of *Game Players*. Only the most dedicated, code crazy, game fanatics with the hottest new codes have entered the hallowed halls of the Golden Bananas. To enter, send your code along with your name, address, and what game system you own to: All Access, *ULTRA Game Players*, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005.

All PlayStation and Saturn Code Monkey winners will receive a *Game Shark Videogame Enhancer*, provided courtesy of Interact Accessories, Inc. Future Code Monkey winners who own an N64 will also receive a *Game Shark* for their system, but unfortunately, N64 Game Sharks are not yet available. *ULTRA Game Players* reserves the right to substitute a prize of equal or greater value for N64 owners until such time that N64 Game Sharks become available. PC owners won't get jack! No, no, just kidding. PC owners will receive a prize of equal or greater value than a *Game Shark* at the discretion of *ULTRA Game Players*.



GAME SHARK





GAME SHARK CODES

NOTE: YOU MUST HAVE A GAME SHARK TO USE THESE CODES.



Saturn



ANORETTI RACING

Master Code.....16000914 c305
b6002800 0000
Quality in First.....160b3786 0064

NBA JAM EXTREME

Master Code.....16000914 c305
b6002800 0000
Home Team Scores 0.....1602e446 0008
Away Team Scores 0.....1602e44a 0000

POWERSLAVE

Master Code.....16000914 c305
b6002800 0000
All Keys.....1604a556 ffff

All Weapons And Artifacts 1608607e ffff
All-Seeing Eye.....1605185e 0001
Infinite Flame Thrower.....160860a2 00e0
Infinite Health.....1608608a 0008
Infinite M-60 Ammo.....1608609a 001e
Infinite Manacle Ammo.....160860ae 0004
Infinite Pistol Ammo.....1608609e 003c
Infinite Ring Of Ra Ammo 160860aa 00e0

SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

Master Code.....16000914 c305
b6002800 0000
Infinite Lives.....160894c2 0009
Have 5 Stars.....16086b4 001f

PlayStation



ANORETTI RACING

Quality in first.....801eb35c a36d
801eb360 c9ae
801eb374 0111
Infinite Fuel.....801eb3a8 3cf8
801eca8c 3732
801e0194 0040
801e019c 0040

COOL BOARDERS

High Scoring.....80016210 0000
80016212 0000
Extra Tracks.....801ef82a 0005
Extra Boards.....801ef82e 0007

RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

Extra Cars.....801dd208 0001
Course Select.....801dc90c 0707
Race as Black Car.....8007c43a 000c
Race as Black Kid Car.....8007c43a 000d
Race as White Car.....8007c43a 000e

TWISTED METAL 2

Extra Vehicles.....8018dd04 0101
Infinite Armor.....8018d900 0096
Infinite Armor - P2.....80188514 0096
Infinite Fire Missiles.....801882ee 0009
Infinite Fire Missiles - P2.....80188afc 0009
Infinite Homing Missiles.....801882ea 0009

Inf. Homing Missiles - P2.....80188afc 0009
Infinite Lightning.....801882f4 0009
Inf. Lightning - P2.....80188b08 0009
Infinite Napalm.....801882f0 0009
Inf. Napalm - P2.....80188b04 0009
Infinite Power Missiles.....801882e8 0009
Inf. Power Missiles - P2.....80188b02 0009
Infinite Remote Bombs.....801882c0 0009
Inf. Remote Bombs - P2.....80188b00 0009
Infinite Ricochet Bombs.....801882f2 0009
Inf. Richt. Bombs - P2.....80188b06 0009
Infinite Specials.....801882e6 0009
Inf. Specials - P2.....80188afa 0009
Rapid Fire.....801882fe 0000

WAAHAMMER

Infinite Cash.....800db920 270f

WIPEOUT XL

Infinite Energy.....30094529 0001
Track Select.....8011e4d2 0001
Pranha Team.....8011e4ac 0100



You must have the Game Shark Enhancer for these codes to work!



SOUL BLADE

NAMCO • PLAYSTATION

Hidden Characters

Each character has two endings. Usually, the ending is letter-boxed, but at times the black bars disappear. When this happens, hit all four main action buttons (high slash, low slash, kick, block) simultaneously to totally change the ending. Some endings, like Mitsuru's, are actually mini-games (dodge the arrow).

To make *Soul Edge* (*Soul Blade*) playable, simply beat the game once with everyone with any ending.

Get an eighth weapon for each character by doing the following. Beat *Soul Edge* in master mode, save the game and continue fighting in nearby places. Keep losing. After a loss (when the map screen character does

a pose), the weapon is at a random location exactly one space away from where the loss took place. Go there and win to get it. Get all 8 weapons for Sophitia, and receive a secret character named SOPHITIA! The 8th weapon trick can also create SIEGFRIED! in the same way.

Get all 10 additional weapons (80 total) for the characters to access SOPHITIA! She is just like Sophitia, except she's nearly naked!

To access the ultimate hidden guy, Han Myong, acquire all 80 weapons first. Then in one sitting, beat the game with Hwang and Seung Mina (in that order) using only their basic endings.



Note: The following Game Tips were derived from the Japanese version of the game called *Soul Edge*. Namco has a history of bringing games to the U.S. with no significant changes, but there is always the possibility that certain elements of the game may be changed or deleted (i.e. the nearly naked SOPHITIA!)

CODE MONKEY:

Mark Gottlieb, Rock Tavern, NY





MECHWARRIOR 2 (part 2)

ACTIVISION • PLAYSTATION • SATURN



Clan Wolf Campaign, Missions 9-16

Mission 9

Once more, valor in combat has earned you the opportunity to fight in a Trial of Position. If successful, you will be rewarded with a new rank.



Mission 10

The 37th Strike Cluster has already engaged the enemy on Wotan. The primary mission is to destroy the chemical plant and the airbase, crippling the Falcons' air support. Then, assist the 37th if you are able.



Mission 11













In the battle for Wotan, the Drop Ship *Hermione* crashed after dropping several units. The wreckage contains data which can not fall into Jade Falcon hands. Find the wreckage, inspect the data to download it, and then destroy the Drop Ship remains.



Mission 12

Your superiors have again deemed you worthy of a Trial of Position.



-  **Enemy Mech**
-  **Enemy Tank**
-  **Enemy Aircraft**
-  **Power Up**
-  **Structure**
-  **Enemy Turret**
-  **Hover Train**
-  **Enemy Vehicle**
-  **Engagement Sphere**
-  **Power Up**
-  **Drop Zone**
-  **Mountain**





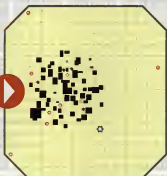
Mission 13

The Falcons are terraforming Kareth, Morges' moon, to use as a base in this system. With a captured Jade Falcon Mech, locate and destroy the main Terraformer Unit. To do so, find the weak spot in the Terraformer's armored core.



Mission 14

This mission will require the performance of bodyguard duty. Accompany Aide de Camp Feltadrai's hover limousine to the Opera-Plex in Broken Hope, and eliminate any threat to his safety.



Mission 15

It is suspected that the remaining Jade Falcons on Morges are using the Palace Complex as a communication station. Inspect the complex. If the Falcons are using it as a comm station, destroy it.



Mission 16

This final Trial of Position will be a last chance at the glory you earned in the Refusal War. If successful, your deeds will be remembered forever; if you fail, you will die anonymous.



In the close confines of a walled fortress or out in the open, ruthless brutality is the only true ally in *Mechwarrior 2*.



Follow the road, fly through the air, or simply trample your way across the countryside — there are objectives to be attained and enemies to conquer.



NETWORK CONNECTION

Welcome to this month's Network! It seems like everyone out there has a ton of questions about the videogame industry in general and some of our editors more 'interesting' habits and vices in particular. Somehow, that figures.

As usual, we've tried to be very handy in giving you the answers you need... If you have any compliments, criticisms or complaints, we want to hear about it. Just drop us a line at the address below.

ULTRA GAME PLAYERS
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, Ca 94005

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS...

Very handy

A wise salesman once told me that the more parts something has, the more likely it's going to break. This brings me to the N64 control stick. After finishing *Mario and Waverace*, it began popping, cracking and squeaking. I couldn't return it for another controller because all the N64's in town are sold out. My only choice was to fix it myself, so I completely voided the warranty and opened it up. There were about 30 INGS parts in the joystick casing alone. I oiled the moving parts and spent about three hours putting it back together. Now it works like a dream. My friend Lisa got me to fix her controller as well, because she was so impressed. P.S. About *Waverace*... this may be the realistic affect of neoprene on a bare ass, but do I need to see it in a videogame? Shanda Theaker, Calgary AB

ROGER>>> At this point, I could make some wisecrack about the need for a little TLC when playing with a joystick, but hey, we're a more mature, serious magazine now, aren't we? My only suggestion is that if the stick you're using can't take the beating, check out some of the quality third party controllers out there who offer more, err... endurance. As for bare asses, yes, it is absolutely necessary. There was much debate at UGP about adding a 'Bare Ass' category to our rating system (weighted by 10).

Unfortunately, the puritans in the office won out and all I can hope for now is a series of games like *Bare Ass*, *Bare Ass II*, *Bare Ass III*, *Ultimate Bare Ass III*, and *Bare Ass Trilogy*.

Driver education

I have played a lot of racing games and they all have something in common: you always have a problem getting by other cars, so I think somebody should make a game where cars have horns to get the other cars out of the way.

The reason why I like this idea is because you know how people these days are trying their best to make things as real as possible, so why doesn't anybody make a game where the cars have horns, reverse lights, and turning lights or signals? Ryan Gray, Suitland, MD

MIKE>>> Hello Ryan. Let me start off by asking you a question. If you were racing for first place and

the car behind you honked its horn, would you move out of the way? If there were games made about driving through city traffic, then a horn and signal would be nice, but I guarantee you that none of the *Andretti* family is going to let you by just because you honked the horn.

She waits...

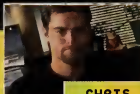
I've just bought a PlayStation and so far, I'm enjoying it — the included Demo disc, that is. Hey, its not like I won the lottery. Anyway, I wanna know how long will it be before it loses its popularity and sits on the shelf with SNES and Genesis. 1. Do you think that in a couple of years, no game company will make games for PlayStation? Or, on the contrary, is it much easier to make games on CD? 2. What is a 'Black Sony'? Why is it better and how much is it? 3. Are there any new systems on the horizon? How much will they cost? Ann Melnichuk, Brooklyn, NY

CHRIS>>> My pleasure, Ann! 1. Don't worry — PlayStation is so successful, you can look forward to new games for years to come. 2. The 'black Sony' is called 'Varouze', and is a low-end, inexpensive



No, it's not Los Lobos or an LA street gang. It's the ULTRA Game Players freelancers! Note the rented shades...

PLUG IN & MEET THE TEAM:



CHRIS

'So long, suckers'



BILL

'Haircut make me real normal!'



MIKE

'Who can I talk B-ball with?'



ROGER

'Can I have the window seat?'

PlayStation development kit for making your own PlayStation games (however, you also need a PC, and knowledge of C programming).

3. Don't expect any new systems soon, but eventually everyone will upgrade to something more powerful as the technology progresses—that's just how the industry works.

Numbers game

I received *Mario 64*, *WaveRace 64* and *Star Wars* from Santa (what a great guy). I noticed in the bottom of the cartridge on the black surface in the lower left there is a small number. On *Mario* there's a 4, on *WaveRace* a 9 and on *Star Wars* a 12. Why are these numbers there? When is *Mario Kart 64* due to release in the U.S.? Hey Roger, I think your rating on *Star Wars* sucked. Just cause it's on N64, you wanted perfect graphics. The game itself is tons of fun and the graphics don't take too much away from that. Rick Davis III, Lawrence, MA

ROGER>>> The numbers on cartridges are a secret code from Nintendo that say 'We know SOTE sucked, but thanks for your 80 bucks anyway!' Regarding the graphics, I don't require 'perfect graphics'. I just think that a 64-bit system should be able to produce noticeably better graphics than a 32-bit system. I'm glad you found the game fun, but I expect a little more than rehashing videogame clichés in a *Star Wars* guise from my next gen gaming.

Play ball

I have a couple of questions for you about the Nintendo 64:

1. Are they going to make *NBA Live '97* for the 64?
2. Are they ever going to make any football games?
3. Why in HELL have they not lowered

their game prices?

Herman Haynes,
Wichita, KS

MIKE>>> Welcome to the world of the N64. The few games available are pricey and there just aren't any real sports games. *NBA Live '97* is not scheduled for the N64, but it is possible that '98 will make it. As for football games, the only one that appears certain to arrive is *Quarterback Club '98*, although there have been rumors about *Madden '98* as well.

Too much!

Chris, answer these questions!

1. Why would you pay \$200 for the N64, another \$200 for the N64 DO, \$45 for the second Controller and \$60-80 per game???
 2. Will the N64 price drop?
 3. Is there another *Final Fantasy* game in the works for PlayStation?
- Terry McClelland,
Musjogee, OK

CHRIS>>> Questions, questions — HERE WE GO!!!

1. If you've got the dough, and the games are THAT good, why not?
2. It's already dropped by about \$70 in Japan — maybe we'll see a similar situation here at year's end.

3. I think that the crew behind *Final Fantasy VII* have taken a much-deserved vacation. However, don't expect them to rest TOO long...

Crispy killer

Bill, is Bacon the real 'silent killer' in the U.S.? Please tell us before it's too late! Chris
Chips & Bits, VT

BILL>>> Don't worry about our fried food friend, Chris! The real silent killer in the nutrition world are these damn Chicken Cookies! We know this because... sob... WE'RE ADDICTED TO THE DAMN THINGS!!! We can't... stop... eating them... GIMMEE THOSE CHICKEN COOKIES... YOU'VE HAD MORE THAN YOUR SHARE, NOW IT'S MY TURN!!! YUM... YUM... Oh Chicken Cookies... how I love your savory goodness... your crunch texture... your high cholesterol level... YUM!

Top Left: No one believed it when we said Chris Slate was really a vampire...

Top Right: *WaveRace 64* — totally realistic butt effects...

Center: Yes, they really do exist and they're all mine, so BACK OFF, UK31?

Bottom Left: *NBA Live '97* — not scheduled for the N64 any time soon.

Bottom Right: *WaveRace 64* — ...and some cool tricks, too!

VISIT OUR WEB SITE:

HTTP://WWW.ULTRAGP.COM

CHRIS: chris_slate@qm.imagine-inc.com

BILL: bill_donohue@qm.imagine-inc.com

MIKE: mike_salmon@qm.imagine-inc.com

ROGER: roger_burchilla@qm.imagine-inc.com

http://www.ultragp.com



Who's scary?

I just wanted to say that you were right in your review of *Resident Evil*. There was just one thing you forgot to say: HOW DAMN SCARY IT IS!!! I spent \$50 on a game that I'm just to scared to play. Don't get me wrong, I love it, but the zombies scare me to much. I just have one more thing to say. You all look soooo cute! If I was older, I would do what I do to the boys in my class. I would chase you around and try to hug you and kiss you! P.S. They try to run away, but I don't know why. Janina Sierra, Philadelphia, PA



BILL>>> I know just how you feel, Janina! Everytime I want to play Resident Evil, I have to go through this whole ritual. First, I've got to get a squirtgun and fill it with holy water. Then I have to climb into the garlic suit and put on the super dark welder's goggles. Sometimes it gets to be a real drag. On the other hand, how old are you? I believe we will have a secretarial position opening up soon...

PSX ponderings

I have a couple of PlayStation questions for you:

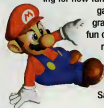
1. Is there going to be a *Twisted Metal 3* coming out? If so, when?
2. Why does Sony want to make another PlayStation when it's only been out for about a year?
3. One more thing, if possible, where could I find demo discs for PlayStation?

Ian Paxton, Findlay, OH

MIKE>>>
1. There has been no official announcement of a *Twisted Metal 3*, but the deal between Sony and *Single Trac* (the developers) still calls for a few more games. We're betting you'll see a TM3 by Christmas '98.
2. Sony has no plans on releasing a PlayStation 2 anytime soon, but it is continually researching for the next generation. Technology just won't stand still.
3. The PlayStation Underground is a club you can join that sends out a demo disk four times a year. Call Sony for more details.

Mean to Mario

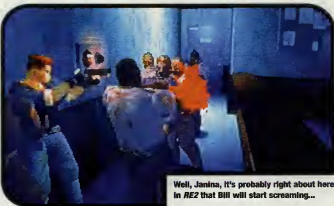
Why does Mario 64 get a 10 in innovation? I have seen it done before — Super Mario Land 2, Super Mario Brothers 1-3. Just



CHRIS>>> First of all, I'm a big PlayStation fan, and I agree that *Tomb Raider* is very innovative — it's a classic! But hey, you've got to give Mario 64 some respect, too. Sure, we've seen the same Mario-type puzzles and enemies in his previous games, but the completely 3D gameplay totally changed the feel and play of the game! As for your new rating idea, we've been using it all along — a game's final overall rating is, basically, exactly how 'fun' a game really is.

Say what?

Bill, I have a few questions:
1. I think the Devil is inhabiting my



Well, Janina, it's probably right about here in RE2 that Bill will start screaming...

pants. What should I do?
2. Are there any plans for a *Super Bomberman 4*?
3. Do you like pudding? My favorite flavor is grape. What's yours?
4. Are there plans to release *Final Fantasy's 4-6* in America?
 P.S. I will strike again.
 Chester Whitlow, Terre Haute, IN

BILL>>> Chester, your letter has restored my faith in America's youth! Let's answer your questions! First of all, that's not the Devil in your pants. You'll learn what that is when you get older. Secondly, I have two plans for SBA. I will love it and honor it and play it, unless it has kangaroos in it. In that case, it's dogmeat. Third, yes I like pudding. Not enough to get serious, but we've had a few fun dates and will continue to see one another. Finally, those games could be released after *Final Fantasy VII*, but nothing has been confirmed at this time. About the strike thing... don't worry. We won't cross your picket line!



TWISTED METAL 2 — Start looking for it under the tree sometime around this Christmas, Ian!

ASK THE INDUSTRY



This month we took it upon ourselves to ask the industry. We had an opportunity to have a roundtable discussion with Tetsuya Mizuguchi, a producer for Sega's AM development team. He has been the producer on *Sega Rally* and *Manx TT*. His knowledge and insight on the future of arcade games

You ask the questions, the experts answer

proved to us all exactly why the best games are made in Japan.

UGP: Recently the arcades have undergone a change with much effort being put into fancy cabinets and linked machines. Do see this as the future of arcade games or is there something else?

Mr. Mizuguchi: The arcade has no limit like the console market. We can build an entire car as a

make a game that is fun.

UGP: What kind of games are you working on for the future?

Mr. Mizuguchi: I am currently working on a new racing game and a completely different kind of game. They are still real early in development and I can't really comment on them.

UGP: You've been mostly associated with racing

cabinet, this is something that the consoles can't do. However, the games that Sega makes are not about technology. We use the best technology but only to deliver great content. The first thing we do when making a game is to decide what makes a game fun. It would be easier to make a racing game that was completely realistic, but we would rather

THE JADED GAMER

The next big craze in gaming, apparently, is playing these strategic war games, like *Army Men*. There's nothing wrong with this, mind you. After all, war has been the human race's biggest product ever since Cain got that preemptive strike in on Abel.

But while *Army Men* has a great premise, they totally blew the delivery.

First of all, when we were kids, we never called them 'Army Men'. Well, maybe that weird kid who would always have some cowboys and pirates mixed in with his commandos would, but we always called our troops 'My Guys'. It was always 'My Guys are gonna murder your Guys in their sleep! Heh, heh, heh...' So, right off the bat, they got the name wrong. Go figure...

Next, I got a real problem with the way combat is represented. You push a button and your Guys move out, shooting little bullets at the enemy Guys. BORING!!!

Everybody knows the correct way to get the most fun out of your Guys. First, you gotta find some dirt. It can be a little corner or a huge field, but it's gotta be dirt. Next comes the sacred setting-up phase. You put your coolest Guys (the most

realistic ones) in the best places, while you put those dumbass marching Guys (who thought those up?) right where they'd be sure to get wasted. While you're doing this, you'd be reciting all the great war lines you'd seen in movies, like 'Kibby! They got Kibby!' and 'Take that, you dirty Kraut!'. Once the setting up was done, it was time to bring out the big guns. BB guns, slingshots, or just rocks — if you had a Mom who wanted her kid to have two eyes in the future — everything was legal. A kid with a couple of firecrackers would be revered as a true patriot for weeks! Nuke 'em! Hell, I remember one memorable battle where we had to declare my little brother the winner when he came running across the battlefield sans diaper and delivered a high yield, low-level strike that resulted in many of my best Guys being left outside until I hosed 'em off!

Talk about biological weapons... Anyway, you'd take turns dealing out death to your opponent's Guys. Of course, you had to be screaming 'Banzai!' or 'Marine, you die!' really loud the whole time. And don't forget the sound effects! You had to throw in a 'Takka-takka-takka' or a 'Ka-Boom!' every once in a while. One clean shot that blew the head off of somebody's Guy would be talked about for a week! Now, that's what we'd call pure combat fun! Yes!!!

So let's get on the right track, you game developers! Let's get the dirt back into combat, OK?



'Cuz I've got this one really cool Guy with TWO machine guns AND a knife in his teeth and he'll murder your Guys in their sleep! Heh, heh, heh...



Malicious ramblings from the man who's played it all

Only a consummate pro like the Jaded Gamer can slam a pretty good game, ramble on and on about his childhood and embarrass yet another family member, all at the same time! Oh yeah, 'sans' means 'without'.

Top Left: *Army Men* — Fun stuff!

Top Right: *SB2* — Still a classic!

Center: Mike shows his caring, sensitive side.

Bottom Left: *FFVII* — Can't wait!

Bottom Right: *Tomb Raider* — The sequel is on the way!

games, why is that?

Mr. Mizuguchi: In Japan there are many more desolate mountainous roads and many people love to drive fast down the roads. Therefore, Japanese people (myself included) tend to really enjoy racing. And as a game racing is fun. Even though our games aren't entirely real, they do give a great feeling of speed and control. So we make the racing game is the most fun and that's why I work on them.

UGP: Why aren't your games real, is it too hard?

Mr. Mizuguchi: Making a racing game realistic would actually be the easiest way, but real isn't always most fun. If racing game is real then it goes to slow. So we make games fun, but based on reality. The key to any game isn't how close to reality it is, but how much fun it is.

ASK THE BIG BOYS!

Do you have something to say about a particular game company? Say it to their face! Write up your question and send it to the usual address, c/o Ask The Industry.

Wake up!

Roger, I'm going to be brief, so you won't fall asleep on me, OK? Just answer and maybe I'll play you a lullaby on the sound test.

1. I loved *Crash Bandicoot*, but now that I've beat it (100%, by the way), it's no fun any more. Got any good suggestions?
 2. Is N64 worth spending my money on? If so, what games do you recommend?
- Peter Jurmu,
Mason, MI

ROGER>>> 1. Use it as a coaster. 2. It really is a matter of personal preference. Right now, there are a few really good games on N64 and a lot of mediocre and even bad titles. As good as Super Mario 64 is, I haven't found a compelling reason (or game) to make me purchase my own personal N64. But then, there are people like Chris who spend all night playing the latest N64 game and come to the office in the morning with a contented smile. (I won't go into his little ritual of chanting in tongues, lighting candles, and hugging his stuffed Mario doll.) Some people can't live without Nintendo games; others, (like me), can. Of course, that may all change when *Zelda 64* comes out.

Two times the fun

I got a Nintendo 64 for Christmas and it was so much fun that I let my cousin Timmy hold my PlayStation. Now, he won't give it back. He says that it is wrong for one person to love two systems at once. He says that's called adultery and God doesn't like that. I also have a Gameboy, a SNES, and an NES. He told me to think of them as mine and the N64's children, so its OK to play with them. He doesn't want that slutty PlayStation

breaking up our

family, he said. Is he right? Some of those PlayStation games were fun, but I don't want to go to hell for them. Damien Lewis, Statesboro, GA

GILL>>> Well, Damien, let's examine the moral issues at stake here. First of all, when the PlayStation came out, it did have somewhat of a racy reputation. Now, if you decided to make an 'honest' system of it, what right did you have to start a relationship with that homewrecking N64? Have you no shame? To be blunt, your brother is absolutely correct in his judgement. You better start figuring out how to take a whole bunch of ice with you when your time comes, sinner!!!

SURFED ANY GOOD WEB SITES LATELY?

Drop us an e-mail with the URL. If we feel that it goes above and beyond the call of duty, we'll feature the page in a future issue!

FAN SITE OF THE MONTH

FINAL FANTASY VII HOMEPAGE

<http://www.dragonfire.net/~sato/f77hp.htm>

Perhaps one of the most comprehensive sites of its kind is like Sato's *FFVII* page. Not only does he offer the latest *FFVII* news and coverage, but it also digs into other Square projects, like *Bushido Blade* and *Final Fantasy Tactics*.

The page layout isn't

graphic intense, so it allows for easy navigation. Despite being a low-bandwidth site, it is housed on a very sluggish server. The other problem is that there isn't enough Square news, let alone *FF* news to keep the site updated on a daily basis.

Despite these problems, this is an excellent site. His extensive story and character translations help gamers along who've purchased the import version of *FFVII*. And the extra sec-

tions that talk all about the *FFVII* merchandising is an 'otaku's' dream come true.



Mr. Sato has probably the best *FFVII* site in existence. All of *FFVII*'s main characters are profiled here. If you can't understand Japanese, then this menu translation will help you get started. Check out all the *FFVII* merchandise.

Top Left: *Crash Bandicoot* — No replay value?
Top Right: *Zelda 64* — Should be an instant classic!
Center: *Mario 64* — Just OK?
Bottom Left: Bill and a special friend spend some quality time.
Bottom Right: The PlayStation.

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32099	Golden Axe 64	\$44
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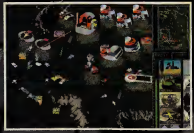
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